IMPERIAL SPHERES AND THE ADRIATIC

Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)

EDITED BY
MLADEN ANČIĆ, JONATHAN SHEPARD AND TRPIMIR VEDRIŠ

Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic

Although often mentioned in textbooks about the Carolingian and Byzantine empires, the Treaty of Aachen has not received much close attention. This volume attempts not just to fill the gap, but to view the episode through both micro- and macro-lenses. Introductory chapters review the state of relations between Byzantium and the Frankish realm in the eighth and early ninth centuries, crises facing Byzantine emperors much closer to home, and the relevance of the Bulgarian problem to affairs on the Adriatic. Dalmatia's coastal towns and the populations of the interior receive extensive attention, including the region's ecclesiastical history and cultural affiliations. So do the local politics of Dalmatia, Venice and the Carolingian marches, and their interaction with the Byzantino-Frankish confrontation. The dynamics of the Franks' relations with the Avars are analysed and, here too, the three-way play among the two empires and 'in-between' parties is a theme. Archaeological indications of the Franks' presence are collated with what the literary sources reveal about local elites' aspirations. The economic dimension to the Byzantino-Frankish competition for Venice is fully explored, a special feature of the volume being archaeological evidence for a resurgence of trade between the Upper Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean from the second half of the eighth century onwards.

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Sauro Gelichi is an archaeologist and Professor in the Department of Humanities of the Università Ca'Foscari, Venice. For many years an inspector of archaeology in Emilia Romagna, he has also lectured at Pisa and Parma and edits *Archeologia Medievale*. His research interests include the history of medieval urban and rural settlements and material culture, particularly ceramics, and he has excavated in Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Veneto and Lombardy, as well as in Tunisia, Syria, Turkey and Montenegro. He has published extensively, including co-editing with Richard Hodges *From One Sea to Another* (2012) and *New Directions in Early Medieval European Archaeology* (2015).

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(with Fedir Androshchuk and Monica White, 2016). He is the author of many articles on subjects which range from Anglo-Saxon settlements on the Black Sea to the First Crusade. A collection of his articles was published in *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe* (2011).

Magdalena Skoblar is a Research Associate of the University of York and a Research Fellow of the British School at Rome. Her book, *Figural Sculpture in Eleventh-Century Dalmatia and Croatia: Patronage, Architectural Context, History* (2016), is the first English-language monograph on medieval Croatian sculpture. She received her PhD from the Department of History of Art at the University of York in 2011. Her current research focuses on medieval visual culture in the Adriatic basin, and she recently completed a British Academy-funded postdoctoral fellowship focusing on the cult of the Virgin Mary in the early medieval Adriatic hosted by the British Schools at Athens and Rome.

Panos Sophoulis is Lecturer in East European History at the National and Kapo-distrian University of Athens. He received his DPhil from the University of Oxford, where he taught Byzantine and Balkan medieval history between 2002 and 2004. He is currently writing a monograph on the mid-thirteenth-century Mongol invasion of south-eastern Europe. His publications include *Bulgaria and Byzantium, 775–831* (2012), which received the John D. Bell Book Prize of the Bulgarian Studies Association in 2013, 'Incorporating the Other: Shaping the Identity of the Christian Community in Early Medieval Bulgaria' (2015) and 'Byzantium's Search for an Ally in the Former Avar Territories in the Early Middle Ages' (2011).

Peter Štih is Professor of Medieval History and Auxiliary Historical Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, a Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and a Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His research interests include early medieval Slav ethnogenesis and state formation in the eastern Alps. He has published many books and articles on the medieval history of the Alpine-Adriatic region, including *Studien zur Geschichte der Grafen von Görz* (1996) and *The Middle Ages between the Eastern Alps and the Northern Adriatic: Select Papers on Slovene Historiography and Medieval History* (2010).

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Miklós Takács is Senior Research Fellow at the Research Centre for the Humanities, Archaeological Institute, Hungarian Academy of Science and Docent at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Budapest. His PhD from Budapest was on 'Clay Cauldrons of the Carpathian Basin', and in 2014 he gained his DSc from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Research interests include the archaeological investigation of early medieval settlements of the Carpathian basin; early medieval ceramics; tenth- to thirteenth-century Hungarian religious architecture and its Byzantine links; and comparative medieval archaeology in the northern Balkans. He is a participant in many projects and author of more than 135 single and jointly authored publications, including 'Crafts in the Árpád Era' (2012) and 'Byzanz und die Steppenvölker im frühmittelalterlichen Donauraum' (2012).

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Daniel Ziemann is Associate Professor in the Department for Medieval Studies of the Central European University, Budapest. After a PhD from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main on 'The Genesis of Bulgaria between Eastern and Western Cultural Influences', he taught at the University of Cologne before joining the CEU. His publications include *Vom Wandervolk zur Grossmacht: Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.–9. Jahrhundert)* (2007); 'The Rebellion of the Nobles against the Baptism of Khan Boris (865–866)' (2007); and 'Onglos – Once Again' (2012).

Preface

Although often featuring in textbooks about the Carolingian and Byzantine empires, the Treaty of Aachen has not received very much close attention from western medievalists, Byzantinists or Slavists. This is surprising, given that it marks the climax of a series of confrontations, armed conflicts and intensive negotiations involving the papacy and local elites in northern Italy and the Upper Adriatic, Dalmatia (a term deriving from the ancient Roman province, encompassing the coast and the hinterland of the north-eastern Adriatic) and the Middle Danube region, as well as the Frankish and the Byzantine leaderships. And although the treaty's text has not survived, and tensions between Byzantine and Frankish rulers were not eliminated, the treaty represents a milestone in the establishment of legitimate Carolingian hegemony in the west. This volume, the fruits of a conference held in Zadar in September 2012, makes an attempt not just to fill the gap in scholarship but to view the episode from all possible angles, political, diplomatic, military, economic and cultural. A mixture of veteran and younger scholars were enlisted for this task so as to draw upon several other disciplines besides general history and to present in the English language important work done by Central and Eastern European scholars.

Introductory chapters review the state of relations between Byzantium and the Frankish realm in the eighth and early ninth centuries, comparing them with international relations in modern times and setting them in the context of western *aemulatio imperii* and the problems facing Byzantine emperors much closer to home (see the chapters by Shepard, Ančić, Majnarić, Sophoulis). One theme of these and subsequent chapters is the relevance of the Bulgar problem to Byzantium's general interest in the Upper Adriatic (Nikolov, Ziemann). This is why the populations of the coastal towns of the old Roman province of Dalmatia along with those of the interior receive extensive attention, with coverage of the ecclesiastical history and of the cultural affiliations of the townsmen and the various inland elites (Skoblar, Cerno, Dzino, Betti, Komatina, Basić, Vedriš). Some chapters focus on the local politics or the local and long-range commerce of Dalmatia, Venice and the Carolingian marches and the interaction of these with the high politics of the Byzantino-Frankish confrontation (Gelichi, Štih, Budak): individuals and families could raise their status by aligning with one side or another, while established regimes might feel themselves threatened. The Franks' relations with the Avars are analysed in detail and, here too, the three-way play between the

two empires and 'in-between' parties is a theme. Archaeological, sculptural and other material indications of the Franks' presence in Dalmatia and the Middle Danube are reviewed (Szőke, Gračanin, Takács). The economic dimension to the Byzantino-Frankish contest for Venice is fully explored, a special feature being the archaeological evidence for a resurgence of trade between the Upper Adriatic and the eastern Mediterranean from the second half of the eighth century onwards. Thus the diplomatic exchanges between Constantinople and Aachen and the intermittent bouts of armed conflict are set within the broader background of shifting local allegiances and an economic upswing.

The end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries was, then, a turning-point at several levels and, in an era of experiment, fragmentation and flux, the image of a spinning compass needle would perhaps be more apt. The careers and changing alignments of Slav warlords like Liudewit in Pannonia and churchmen like Fortunatus of Grado epitomise this, while the problems of attribution of ciboria in that town and of assessing the significance of swords and other Frankish weaponry and Byzantine coins found in Pannonian and Dalmatian soil offer material evidence of this. This volume aims to shed light on the periphery of two political systems, namely the otherwise neglected region between the eastern Adriatic and the Middle Danube. Setting out the problems, it illuminates the multiple processes underway when a variety of communities and cultures find themselves confronting one another, some entering the historical stage for the first time. Such a kaleidoscope does not lend itself to a 'grand narrative', let alone to an overarching synthesis. But it could be that markers have been laid down here for further interdisciplinary work on the Upper Adriatic and Middle Danube regions and even for a more nuanced history of early medieval Europe in general. And narratives of the main events and issues in the run-up to the making of the Treaty of Aachen are offered in such contributions as those by Mladen Ančić and Daniel Ziemann and in other chapters in the first two parts, while the limitations of our knowledge about key topics like the collapse of the Avar khaganate are shown by Miklós Takács' chapter.

Such interdisciplinary work inevitably poses a veritable minefield of questions for the editors to answer. How should we style names? Should we quote in the original language or should we transliterate? And if so, how? Is it helpful to offer a translation of article or book titles when no such translation of the work itself is available? Answering such questions is never easy and invites accusations of inconsistency – or worse. We have tried to make this volume clear and accessible primarily to an English-speaking audience and to non-specialists in the history, art and archaeology of the early medieval southern Slavs, Franks and Byzantines. This has led us to some broad brushwork and possibly controversial decisions. First and foremost, the styling of the very treaty itself: as Mladen Ančić notes in his chapter (below, 34 n. 1), western medievalists have tended to fight shy of styling the 'Treaty of Aachen' as anything more concrete than a series of negotiations or possibly a *pactum*. We have bitten the bullet and call it a treaty. An agreement was, after all, set out in writing, ratified by two powers claiming fully legitimate authority over a disputed area and followed up by negotiations concerning some of its territorial details a few years later. Since the text does not survive, we have to infer its contents from the Frankish annals; Byzantine chronicles

are (characteristically) silent about this, as about most other events in the empire's relations with western potentates. This does not make the formal agreement any less of a treaty. Other issues of terminology include the use of Bulgars rather than Bulgarians up to their Christianization around 864; and Croats become Croatians from the early ninth century, with the formation of what eventually became the kingdom of Croatia. We have also styled as Abodrites the West Slavs who lived in northern Germany in what is today Mecklenburg and Holstein, and as Obodrites the tribe mentioned by the *Annales regni Francorum* in 822–824 (*Praedenecenti*) as living close to the Danube in Dacia. We have also tried to be consistent when styling the leaders of the Venetians (as doges), of the Franks (as dukes) and of local Slav groupings (as *duces*). Colleagues who specialize in any of the fields we range into and perhaps trample upon may, understandably, be uncomfortable with such an approach. For this, we can but plead that these fields are now a little more open to comparison and to exploration.

We have tried to ensure that frequently cited proper names and technical terms are consistent and comprehensible. Greek forms of proper names have generally been adopted – Porphyrogennetos instead of Porphyrogenitus, for example – after *c*. 500; place names have generally been left untouched unless a familiar English form exists – Athens not Athenai. Some names in the present-day Balkans and Asia Minor appear in their current form when the author is guiding the reader through reference to present-day locations. Because the places and territories under discussion are at the point of so many overlapping circles, they tend to have many names. We have provided a short list of Alternative Place Names at the back of the volume (316–18) to help orient the reader and to prevent overloading the text. Thus the reader will find 'Serdika' in the text; but reference to the table at the back will show the alternative forms and spellings encountered elsewhere, including Sardika, Serdica and Sofia.

With a few exceptions, we have transliterated quotations and book titles in Greek, Bulgarian and other Slavonic languages using a modified version of the Library of Congress system for Cyrillic. We have tried to avoid long quotations in the original language, preferring an English translation – unless the passage is the subject of detailed textual analysis. Translations are mostly by our authors unless otherwise specified in the endnote. Given the scarcity of sources for the early history of the Upper Adriatic, some are discussed by more than one of our authors, and so the reader will find different interpretations – and sometimes translations – in the book.

The reader will find a short Glossary at the end of the volume. This does not aim to be exhaustive, and when possible, we have tried to explain technical terms or foreign words in the text. The maps at the start of the book should help to orient the reader and locate some of the key places and areas mentioned by our authors. Absolute consistency is difficult to achieve, and readers may find modern place names alongside ancient ones. It also goes without saying that all boundaries depicted are approximate and, in some cases, highly speculative or controversial. Unless otherwise stated, tables are by the author of a given chapter.

<div style="text-align: right">

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and notes on bibliography

Each chapter is accompanied by a bibliography, broken down into primary sources (with short titles used in the endnotes) and secondary literature (using the name-date system in the endnotes). Where forenames of primary text authors are known, they are cited first: 'Niketas Choniates', not 'Choniates, Niketas'. Where a primary source appears frequently in only one chapter, this has been abbreviated within that chapter's bibliography (for example, 'AM' for 'Amalarius of Metz, *Opera liturgica*' is only found in Chapter 19). Primary sources – and a few secondary works – which are cited frequently by many of our authors appear in the endnotes in abbreviated form, but full details are given in the list of abbreviations that follows. This list also contains the titles of some journals and institutions. Well-known sources (such as the Bible and some Latin and Greek authors) are cited without full bibliographic referencing. Works published in two languages show both titles, divided by an oblique (for example: Goran Bilogrivić, 'Karolinški mačevi tipa K/Type K Carolingian Swords'). Where a summary – however brief – is known to be available in a western language, the title is shown in square brackets (for example: Béla Miklós Szőke, 'A 9. századi Nagyalföld lakosságáról [Die Bevölkerung der Großen Ungarischen Tiefebene im 9. Jahrhundert]').

AA	*Antichità altoadriatiche*
AD	Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica*, ed. Ester Pastorello, *Andreae Danduli Ducis Venetiarum, Chronica per extensum descripta aa. 46–1280 d.C.*, 9 fasc., *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 12.1 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1938–1958)
AH	*Acta Histriae*
ARF	*Annales regni Francorum*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, *Annales regni Francorum inde ab. a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, *MGH SRG* 6 (Hanover: Hahn, 1895)
ASM	Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.* (Munich: Beck, 1988)
AttiRovigno	*Atti del Centro di Ricerche Storiche Rovigno*
BaB	Panos Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria, 775–831* (Leiden: Brill, 2012)

BB	*Byzantinobulgarica*
BCC	*Bizantini, Croati, Carolingi. Alba e tramonto di regni e imperi*, ed. Carlo Bertelli, Gian Pietro Brogiolo *et al.* (Milan: Skira, 2001)
BJ	Ivo Goldstein, *Bizant na Jadranu od Justinijana I. do Bazilija I.* [Byzantium in the Adriatic from Justinian I to Basil I] (Zagreb: Latina et graeca – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta, 1992)
BR	Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988)
BSBC	Danijel Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010)
BSl	*Byzantinoslavica*
CarCh	*Carolingian Chronicles*, trans. Bernhard W. Scholz and Barbara Rogers, *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970)
CCP	*Croatica Christiana periodica*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum, series latina*
CFHB	*Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*
CHBE	*The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
CISAM	Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto
CodCar	*Codex Carolinus*, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, in *MGH EKA* 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), 469–657
CTC	*The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. Cyril A. Mango, Roger Scott and Geoffrey Greatrex, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
DAI	Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. Romilly J. H. Jenkins, 2nd ed., *CFHB* 1 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967)
DRSV	*Documenti relativi alla storia di Venezia anteriori al mille*, vol. 1: *Secoli V–IX*; vol. 2: *Secoli IX–X*, ed. Roberto Cessi (Padua: Gregoriana, 1942; repr. Venice: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1991)
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
FiF	Harald Krahwinkler, *Friaul im Frühmittelalter: Geschichte einer Region vom Ende des fünften bis zum Ende des zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992)
GHI	The Astronomer, *Life of Louis the Pious*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, in *MGH SS* 2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1829),

	604–648; ed. and German trans. Ernst Tremp, in *Thegan, Die Taten Kaiser Ludwigs (Gesta Hludowici imperatoris); Astronomus, Das Leben Kaiser Ludwigs (Vita Hludowici imperatoris)*, *MGH SRG* 64 (Hanover: Hahn, 1995), 279–555
GZMS	*Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu. Arheologija*
HAM	*Hortus Artium Medievalium*
HAZU	Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb
HiK	*Hrvati i Karolinzi*, vol. 1: *Rasprave i vrela*; vol. 2: *Katalog*, ed. Ante Milošević (Split: MHAS, 2000)
JAZU	Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb
JD[1]	John the Deacon, *Chronicon Venetum* [*Cronaca Veneziana*], ed. Giovanni Monticolo, in *Cronache Veneziane antichissime*, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 9 (Rome: Instituto storico italiano, 1890), 57–171
JD[2]	John the Deacon, *Chronicon Venetum* [*Istoria Veneticorum*], ed. and Italian trans. Luigi A. Berto, *Giovanni Diacono, Istoria Veneticorum* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1999)
Mansi	*Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. Johannes D. Mansi, 31 vols (Florence: Antonio Zatta, 1759–1793; repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960–1962)
MEFRM	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; available online: <www.dmgh.de>
MGH EKA	*MGH Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 5 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1925)
MGH PLAC	*MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, 4 vols to date (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881–)
MGH SRG	*MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*, 78 vols to date (Hanover: Hahn, 1871–)
MGH SRG n.s.	*MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum* n.s., 24 vols to date (Berlin–Weimar–Hanover: Weidmann–Hahn, 1922–)
MGH SRLI	*MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum* (Hanover: Hahn, 1878)
MGH SS	*MGH Scriptores*, 39 vols to date (Hanover: Hahn, 1826–)
MHAS	Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika u Splitu
NCMH 2	*The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2: *c. 700–c. 900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
ÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
OEE	Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communication and Commerce AD 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 161 vols (Paris, 1857–1866)
PIAZ	*Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841–1864)
P-RT	*Post-Roman Towns: Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, ed. Joachim Henning, 2 vols (Berlin–New York: de Gruyter, 2007)
RadZhp	*Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*
RÉB	*Revue des études byzantines*
RKK	*Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, 751–918*, ed. Johann F. Böhmer, rev. Engelbert Müh-lbacher, *Regesta imperii* 1 (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1908); available online: <www.regesta-imperii.de/regesten.html> [last accessed 8 May 2016]
SANU	Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti
SHP	*Starohrvatska prosvjeta*
SL	*Suidae lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler, 5 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1938; repr. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967–1971); available online: <www.stoa.org/sol/> [last accessed 16 May 2016]
SSCI	*Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo*, Spoleto
TFLAC	*The Transformation of Frontiers from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. Walter Pohl, Ian Wood and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 2001)
Theoph.	Theophanes, *Chronicle*, vol. 1, ed. Carl de Boor, *Theophanis, Chronographia*, 2 vols (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883–1885)
TS	Thomas of Split, *Historia Salonitana*, ed. and trans. Olga Perić, Damir Karbić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol and James Ross Sweeney, *Thomae Archidiaconi Spalatensis, Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum/Archdeacon Thomas of Split, History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006)
VAHD	*Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku*
VAMZ	*Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*
VAPD	*Vjesnik za arheologiju i povijest dalmatinsku*
VKM	Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, *Vita Karoli magni*, *MGH SRG* 25 (Hanover: Hahn, 1911)
ZRVI	*Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*

Maps

These maps are intended to help orient readers and to locate some of the key places and areas mentioned by our authors. Absolute consistency is difficult to achieve, and readers may find modern place names alongside ancient ones. It goes without saying that the historical boundaries depicted are approximate and, in some cases, highly speculative or controversial.
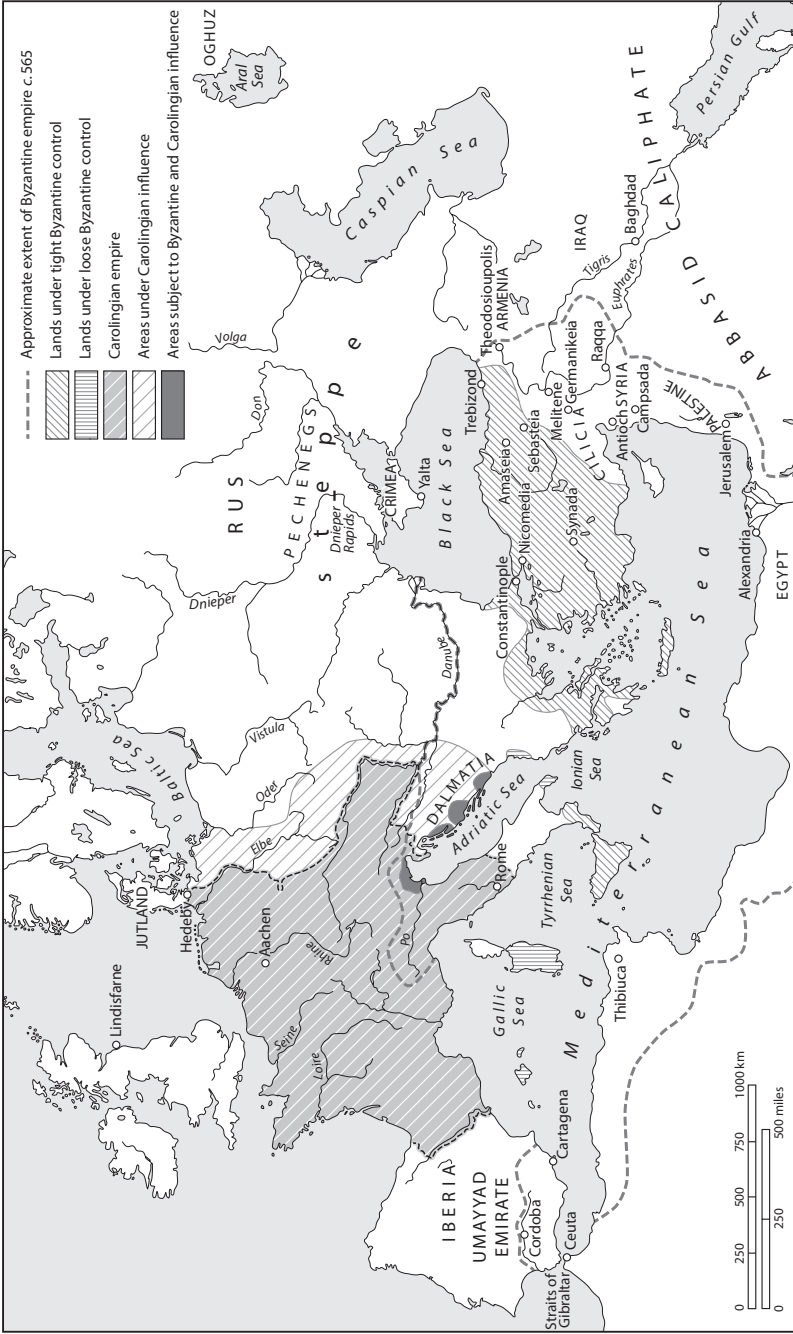
Map 1 The Carolingian and Byzantine worlds collide (*c.* 812)
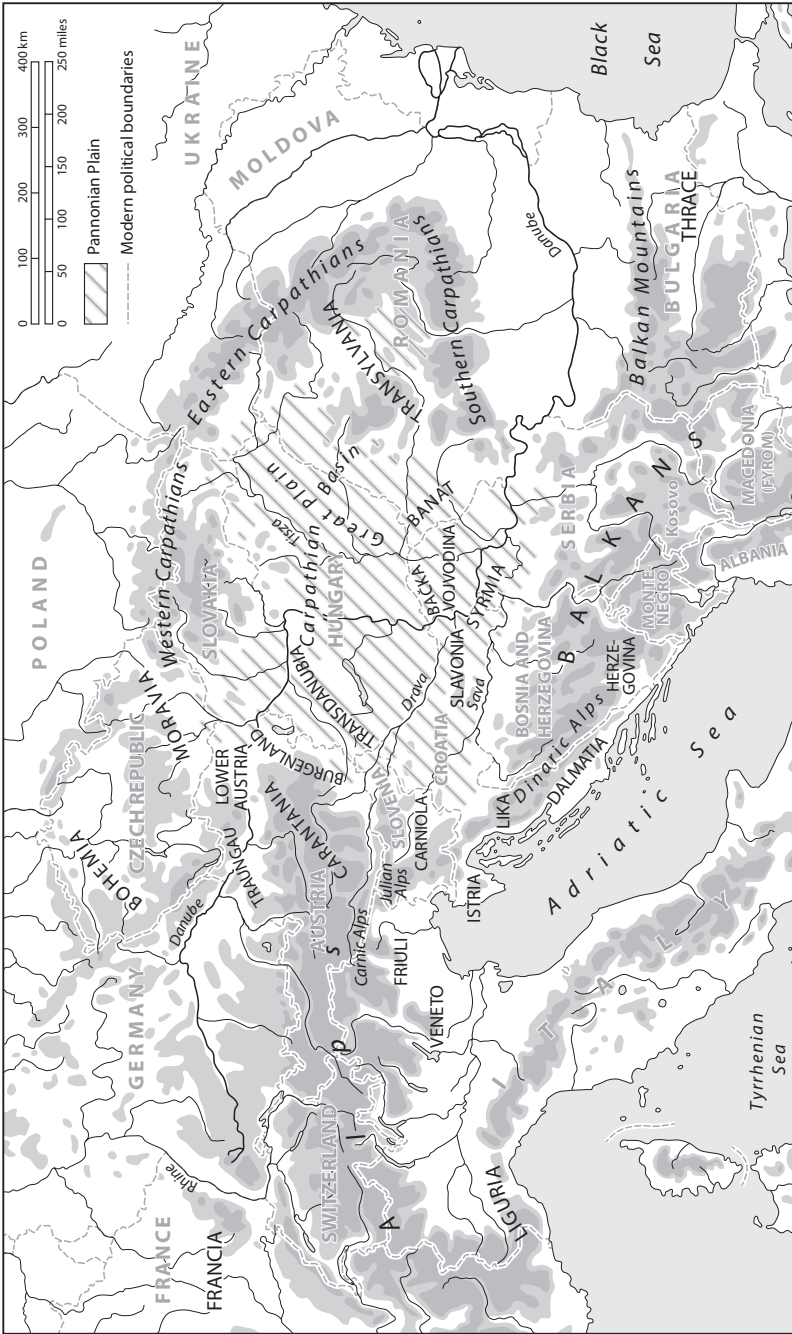
Map 2 Geography and regions, past and present

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Map 4 Pannonia, the Balkans and Byzantium, with insets showing the approximate boundaries of Roman, Late Antique and Carolingian Pannonia (although for a fuller discussion of the highly ambiguous term 'Pannonia', see 225–27 below)
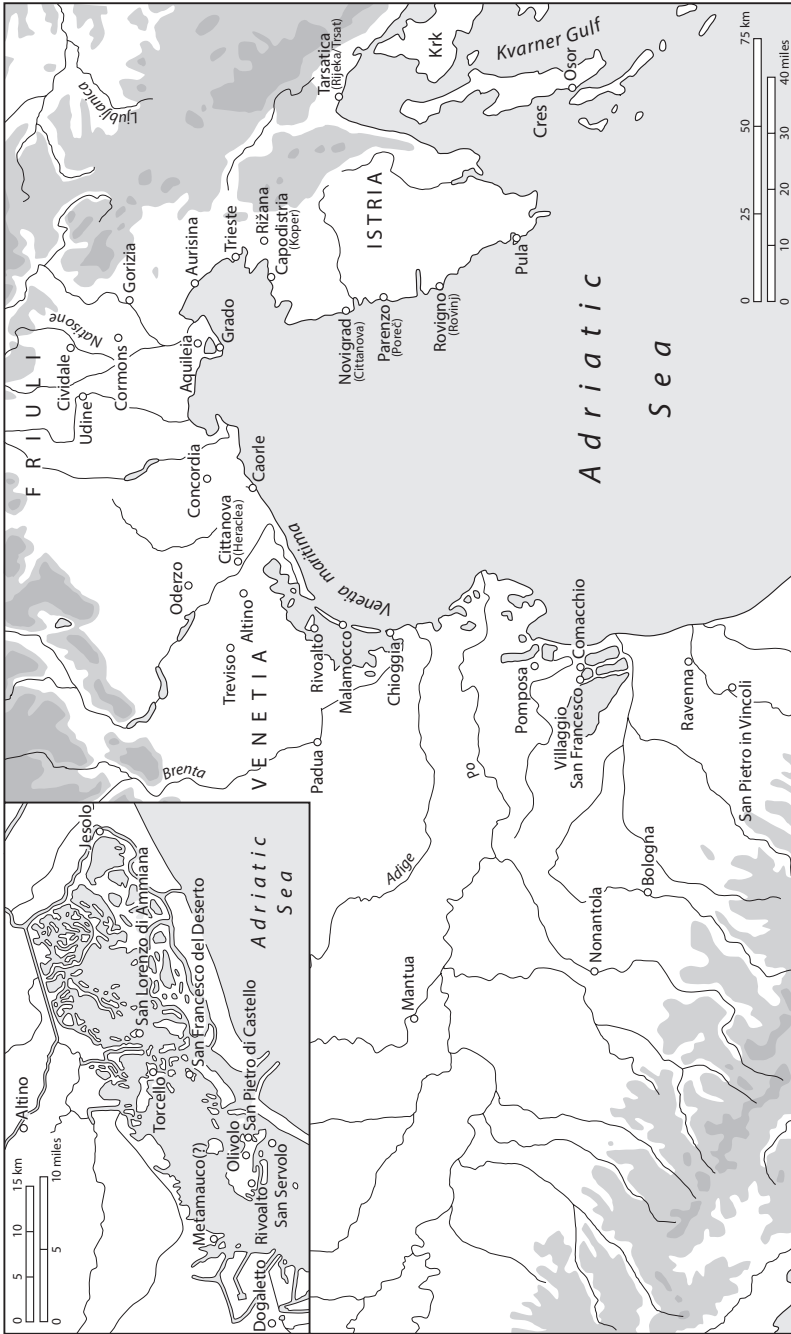
Map 5 The Upper (northern) Adriatic, with inset showing the Venetian lagoons

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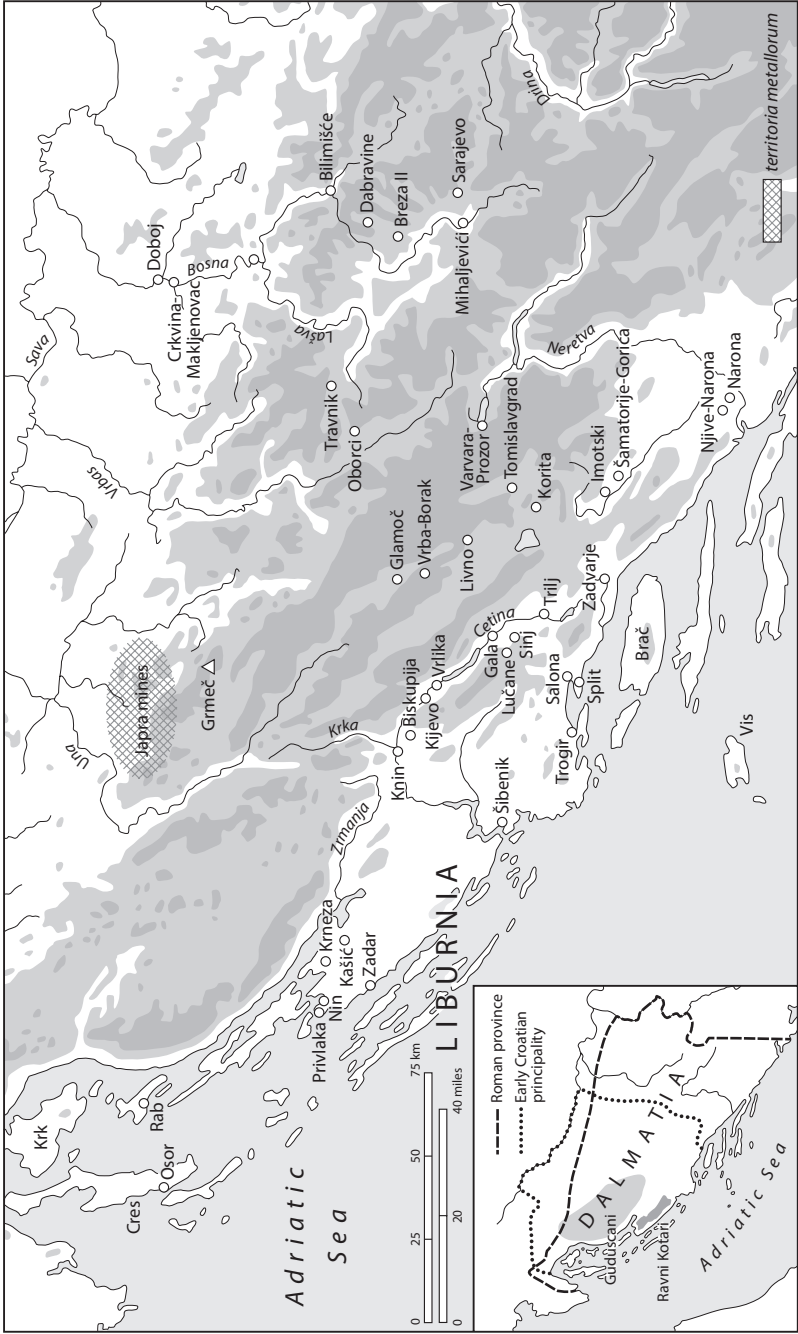
Map 7 Dalmatia, with inset showing the approximate boundaries of the Roman province, the early Croatian principality, the region of Ravni Kotari and the area inhabited by the Guduscani

Map 8 Find sites in Lower Pannonia, showing the assumed boundaries of the area (although for a fuller discussion of the highly ambiguous term 'Pannonia', see 225–27 below)
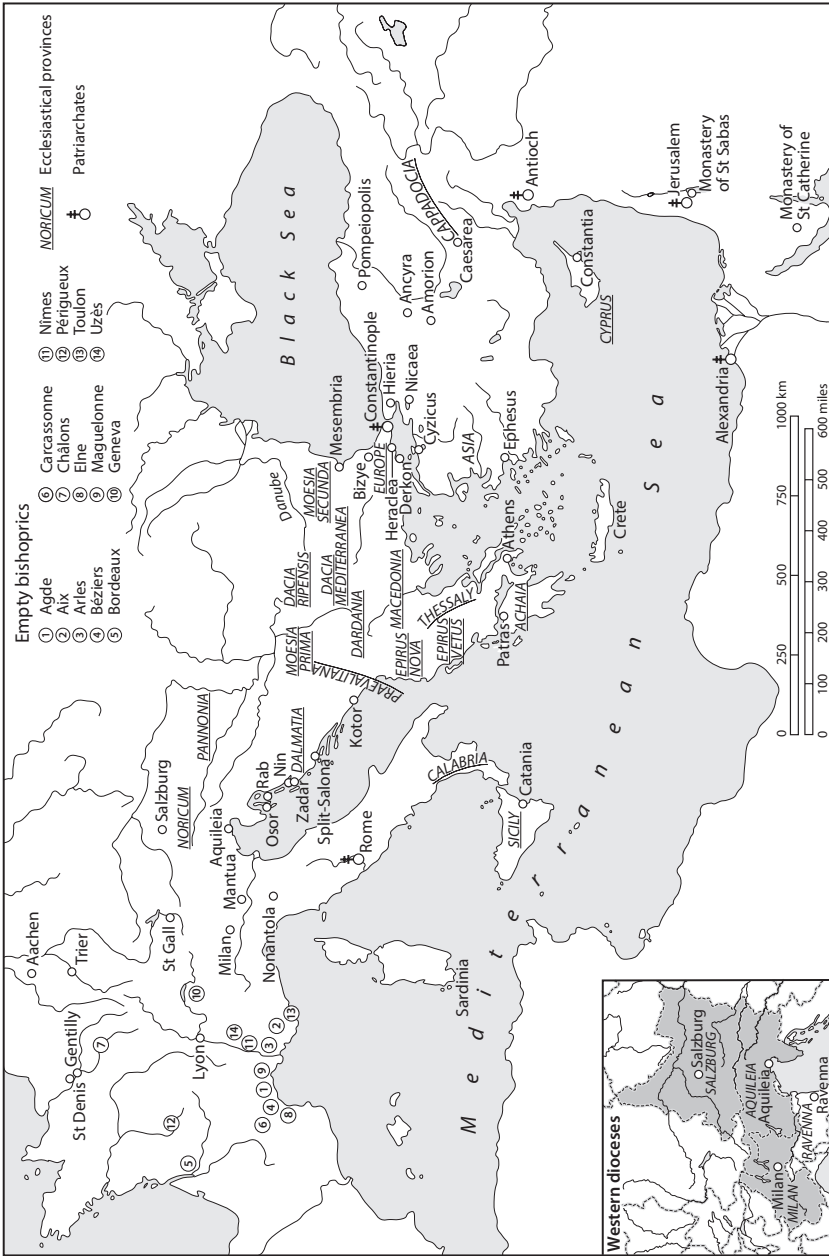
Map 9 Ecclesiastical provinces and places mentioned, with inset showing western dioceses

1   Introduction

Circles overlapping in the Upper Adriatic

Jonathan Shepard

Yalta before Yalta?

The aim of this chapter is not to offer original remarks or fresh information about the course of events leading up to the Treaty of Aachen in 812 or about its immediate aftermath. The aim, rather, is to consider the general problem – not only for us but also for contemporaries – of defining spheres or 'circles' of politico-military power and culture, and of examining how they interacted. This is the subject of my current research, and such problems, along with bids made for wide-ranging political dominion, are also of interest to students of present-day international relations.[1] In fact, upon hearing about the commemorative conference held in 2012, one modern historian asked me whether the agreement of 812 might be said to prefigure the Yalta Agreement of 1945: was it a kind of 'carve-up' between superpowers, showing no regard for the interests of those who found themselves at the interface, in regions like the Adriatic? My response – besides noting our lamentable lack of the actual text of the treaty – was to say that there was probably more regard shown for the interests and wishes of local elites and 'operators' in the early ninth century than in 1945. This was because the state apparatus even of victorious warlords and of established polities like Byzantium was much more limited; accordingly, to attain lasting hegemony they needed cooperation on the part of local elites rather than being able to rely mainly on coercion. And, of course, negotiations at Yalta were conducted by rulers meeting face to face rather than by means of written messages and ambassadors.

Nonetheless, there is merit in the comparison between 812 and 1945: in both cases, boundaries and spheres of influence were in play, as the chapters in this volume show clearly enough.[2] Although the Upper Adriatic and the Italian peninsula were peripheral to Charlemagne and the Byzantine emperor alike, neither ruler was willing to let them pass entirely into the sphere of influence of the other. Byzantium considered Rome and Ravenna to come rightfully within its sphere or circle, much as President Roosevelt considered Rome, Paris and Berlin to fall within what later became known as the Free World, or the 'American empire' in the eyes of its foes. Mention of the 'American empire' opens up another topic that is of interest to modernists as well as medievalists – 'empire', starting with the problem of defining what it means. Some time ago, I was asked to comment

on the following draft definition: 'empires are invariably based on a world view which involves a fantasy of forms of universal government or monarchy, in earlier eras based upon relatively restricted horizons, later taking on an increasingly global scale. It often seems that empires can only be sustained by the maintenance of the expansionist dynamic [. . .] '. I objected that such a definition fails to take account of 'Soft Power' and of all the dividends that may accrue from seemingly *un*-political cultural, religious and material attractions. In my opinion, this objection holds good for pre-modern as well as for modern hegemonies.

Formulated by American political scientists seeking means of upholding American hegemony in the face of economic and military challenges from rising new powers,[3] the concept of Soft Power seems to befit the eastern empire's position from Late Antiquity onwards. It works for the early ninth century, most obviously for the eastern empire's capacity to corrode or seduce elements in the *force majeure* of aggressors but also, to some extent, with regard to the Carolingians – partly because of their unforeseeable dynastic mishaps but also from their realization of the ubiquity of eastern Soft Power in the Mediterranean world. Byzantium found itself facing a political formation that had expanded spectacularly fast, yet which began to lose momentum as the individual driving it grew old and spent ever more time in his palace at Aachen. After the sudden death in 810 of his son Pippin, Charlemagne himself had all the more reason to appreciate the benefits which Soft Power could bring. And even the vigorous Pippin, king of Italy, had proved unequal to the force of Byzantine naval vessels in the Adriatic and duly failed to subjugate all Dalmatian coastal centres.[4]

One may easily enough interpret the Treaty of Aachen as the product of contingency and circumstances – of Charlemagne's predicament upon losing Pippin and his consequent willingness to strike a deal with the Greeks. But I wonder whether one should dismiss as sheer rhetoric Charlemagne's profession of thanksgiving in 813 that Christ has 'both established the peace *long sought after and ever desired* [my italics] between the eastern and the western empire and [. . .] now in our time has deigned to unite and pacify His holy and immaculate Catholic church'.[5] The statement occurs in a letter addressed to the Byzantine emperor Michael I. One might explain Charlemagne's forbearance from describing his realm as an *imperium* in his earlier correspondence as having been motivated solely by desire to avoid provoking the *basileus*. However, I suspect that Charlemagne's phraseology and self-restraint had deeper roots than the need to be tactful. One may, after all, discern a certain sense of partnership in much earlier correspondence between 'Romans' and Franks (see below, 8). Furthermore, Charlemagne was only too aware of the considerable reserves of Soft Power still accruing to the eastern empire and exerting magnetism, not least on the bishops of the 'holy Catholic church' in Dalmatia and in parts of Italy itself.[6] Charlemagne's charters might describe him as 'Romanum gubernans imperium' from soon after his coronation in Rome at the hands of Pope Leo III;[7] and he was arguably acting in quasi-imperial mode well before 800, through the pronouncements issued in his name after the Council of Frankfurt in 794, his patronage of Jerusalem's churches and the initiation of gift exchanges with the Abbasid caliph.[8] Yet he seems to have felt

that something was lacking from his imperial status without the marks of explicit recognition from the eastern emperor, and that his claims to be in the mould of earlier Roman emperors risked ridicule in the absence of acclamations from the eastern emperor's representatives. This, at least, seems to me the likeliest reason for his forbearance from portraying himself on his coins in imperial Roman style before 812, the very year when he received acclamations in Greek as *basileus* in Aachen.[9] Solemn declaration from the *basileus'* envoys that he was his fellow emperor seems to have mattered to Charlemagne even more than details of the territorial borders between the two empires, seeing that the treaty apparently left precise demarcation unclear. The sheer complexity of delineating them is suggested by the arrival in 817 of a Byzantine embassy to negotiate 'the borders of the Dalmatians, the Romans and the Slavs' and by Louis the Pious' acknowledgement that this could only be done on the spot, using the expertise of locally based figures.[10]

Comparable preoccupation with recognition rather than with borders was shown by another aspiring hegemon some two hundred and fifty years later, the Seljuk leader, Toghril Beg. He asked that his name and that of the Abbasid caliph be substituted in Friday prayers in the mosque at Constantinople for the name of the Fatimid caliph, by way of demonstrating his piety and moral right to leadership over the Sunni Islamic world. At the time of asking, in 1055, Toghril Beg had yet to have the titles of 'Sultan' and 'king of the east and west' bestowed on him by the caliph in Baghdad. Mention in the *khutbah* at the Constantinopolitan mosque was a means of gaining general respect, if not legitimacy, for Toghril Beg's sovereignty in Baghdad itself and also from Muslim and Christian populations in Syria and Palestine.[11] Not wholly dissimilar considerations, I suggest, lay behind Charlemagne's bid for recognition as a *basileus*, the acclamations (expressly stated to have been in Greek) in his church at Aachen and also – presumably at his request – the despatch of the Byzantine envoys who had chanted these acclamations onwards to Rome, where Leo III reaffirmed the treaty 'in the basilica of the holy apostle Peter'.[12] This was, I suggest, Charlemagne's means of ensuring that the rites of respect performed at Aachen became widely known in Italian milieus, where some might question or belittle Charlemagne's right to be 'Romanum gubernans imperium'. And as with Toghril Beg, so with Charlemagne, receiving ritual or liturgical recognition from Byzantium probably made more sense than preoccupation with the minutiae of territorial borders. This was not merely because neither hegemon had intended to conquer the empire nor because of all the practical difficulties in demarcating borders. Each was, after his fashion, trying to address the problem Byzantium posed as 'un empire sans frontières', with a call upon the political allegiance, religious veneration or material collaboration of churchmen, elites and communities scattered far beyond its chief territorial holdings. They would continue to hear that call, regardless of any demarcations of political boundaries in formal treaties. Hence the particular value of rites of recognition to the respective hegemons, whether performed continuously in the Constantinopolitan mosque or once, but very publicly, in the newly built imperial-style church in Aachen. These served to demonstrate to the

aforementioned churchmen and members of elites that Charlemagne and Toghril Beg enjoyed solemn and binding endorsement from the *basileus* – and that any local rebels could not expect to receive his overt support. Such endorsement could not wholly debar them from turning to the *basileus* for support. Nor could it put an end to the Byzantines' enticing of elites on the periphery, as some studies in this collection show.[13] Nonetheless, solemn proceedings such as those at Aachen in 812 did something to discredit such goings-on.

The Byzantine challenge to Charlemagne

Charlemagne had, then, in his negotiations with Byzantium in 810–812 – and indeed earlier – to reckon with the persistent appeal of its Soft Power in newly subjugated regions such as northern and central Italy. In his letter of 813 thanking Christ for 'the peace long sought after [. . .] between the eastern and western empire' and for the unification of the 'holy [. . .] Catholic church', Charlemagne implicitly alludes to two problems he had faced for a long time, even while proclaiming their resolution: firstly, that his newly acquired dominions, including the site of his coronation by the Roman pope, were simultaneously integral to Latin Christendom and within one of the 'overlapping circles' of Byzantium; and, secondly, that the *basileus*' sprawling and mutating networks of strongholds and urban elites offered all too many bases for 'Hard Power' – military force – if and when the *basileus* needed to summon it up.[14]

I have discussed in other papers the elastic and intangible aspects of the Byzantine form of empire, which posed such problems for Charlemagne.[15] Rather than going over the ground systematically, I shall pick out four points of some relevance to our theme, dilating only on the fourth of them. Firstly, imperial diplomacy sought to cultivate a series of 'Open Cities', a loose term applying to peripheral population centres, peninsulas and islands that were wealthy enough to attract barbarians and to serve as springboards for assaulting Byzantium or, in one or two cases, were of ideological significance as alternative loci of sovereign authority to Constantinople. The prime example of a city capable of posing an ideological challenge was 'Old Rome'. Hindering the establishment of any alternative imperial regime in the city of Rome was therefore axiomatic, as Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (945–959) comes close to stating outright in his *De thematibus*: 'Rome used to be ruled by an emperor [. . .] but now has put away imperial power and has its own form of government, and it is controlled principally by some pope of the day'.[16] Secondly, and concomitant with this preference for keeping some cities 'open' (although not necessarily subject to the emperor), imperial strategy took a keen interest in chokepoints: those communications hubs, passes or ports where the onset of wayward armed groupings could be regulated with the help of local elements and timely application of Hard Power. The latter could entail forays from garrisoned strongholds or naval expeditions such as the ones initially despatched from Constantinople but apparently commanded by Paul, the *stratēgos* of Cephalonia, against Pippin in 808–810.[17] Thirdly, Soft Power was invaluable for predisposing at least some members of elite families in Open Cities

to collaborate with the *basileus*, thereby maintaining a kind of surrogate presence for him there. Without elaborating upon what devices generated the Soft Power, one may note that they ranged from such earthly delights as three-day-long feasts in the Great Palace to gifts of holy relics – something for every type of sense and sensibility.[18]

Fourthly and finally, the various writings of Constantine VII deserve attention for all the evidence they provide about imperial calculations and geopolitical continuities. The calculations of the various parties that were involved with, or at least had an interest in, the Treaty of Aachen receive fair coverage in this volume.[19] What we lack in panoramic surveys and explicit statements from the imperial circles of that era is partially made up for by the assortment of writings that Constantine and his assistants produced a century and a half later. As Constantine's selection of much earlier texts relating to the Upper Adriatic implies, there were recurring themes and significant constants in the geopolitics of the region. The excerpts provide extensive coverage of Dalmatian coastal population centres and the Upper Adriatic. And their very extensiveness reflects imperial awareness of the potential role of Open Cities and other communities in these regions in curbing or channelling the activities of potentially troublesome military powers, whether nomadic peoples installed in Pannonia or elsewhere in the Danube basin, the Bulgars or the Franks. Constantine does not expressly mention either the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome or the Treaty of Aachen. His silence could reflect sheer ignorance or disinclination to perpetuate the record of unpalatable events. But perhaps it is rather because Charlemagne – a northern-based *monokratōr*, as Constantine signals[20] – had not installed himself permanently in Rome and thus did not seem to pose a serious ideological challenge, despite the provocative silver coins portraying him as a Roman emperor and despite the *basileus*' riposte, in the form of specifying on his own *miliarēsia* that he was 'emperor of (the) Romans'.[21] Nonetheless, the mention in the *De administrando imperio* of Charlemagne's building of 'very many monasteries' in Palestine and despatch of money suggests keen awareness of his quasi-imperial act.[22] So, too, does Constantine's own interest in those peoples and elites of the Upper Adriatic with a track record of resisting the Franks and the Bulgars, and his recounting of stories of the Venetians' and Croats' feats of resistance against them.[23]

There is still fuller treatment of the geopolitics of the region and its links with the Danube basin in the *De legationibus*, in contrast with Constantine's inattention to the episodes occurring in Rome in 800 or Aachen in 812. The task of excerpting passages from historical works was carried out by his aides and, as its title declares, the *De legationibus* is primarily concerned with the dynamics of embassies and messaging. But there seems to be method in the choice of areas and peoples covered, corresponding with the interests and preoccupations of the emperor who commissioned the work. Constantine's *De legationibus* offers quite full background data on the Franks as well as the Goths in the fifth and sixth centuries. One learns, for example, of the Franks' designs on and routes to Italy, and the Goths' understandable distrust of them;[24] of Attila's intervention in the affairs of the Franks and in Italy;[25] and of the Franks' proposal of joint action with Emperor

Maurice (582–602) against the Avars.[26] Allegations of the Dalmatians' 'wayward-ness' feature, too.[27] The daily expectations of Rome's citizens that relief would arrive from Ravenna to break Alaric's siege are recounted, as are Alaric's negotia-tions with the emperor's Ravenna-based representative and request for lands for his people in the Upper Adriatic region, Noricum and Dalmatia, and Honorius' attempt to incite 'thousands of Huns' against Alaric, commandeering livestock for them 'from Dalmatia'.[28] The efforts of the Avar khagan Baian to acquire Sirmium receive extensive coverage, along with their diplomatic ramifications.[29] These vignettes register the strategic importance of the Upper Adriatic region and its accessibility to martial occupiers of the Danubian basin. The inclusion of this sub-ject matter in the *De legationibus* seems to me to reflect the concerns of Constan-tine's own day and a search for precedents and instructive analogies from, mainly, the fifth and sixth centuries. If Constantine's team of excerptors did not draw on extensive narratives for what happened around the year 800, this is presumably because no such narratives were available in Byzantine chronicles or any other texts in the imperial library, and not because the events and leading figures of that era appeared any less relevant than those of the fifth and sixth centuries.[30]

To make this claim of selectivity for the *De legationibus* is perhaps bold, but its choice of areas and peoples matches quite well with the pattern in the *De administrando*, a work reflecting Constantine's personal views and diplomatic calculus. Both works contain material illustrating key characteristics of the Franks and evincing ambivalence towards them. Aggressive and formidable, the Franks are capable of brutality, illustrated by their 'murdering Croats' babies at the breast and casting them to the dogs'.[31] Yet they are susceptible to resistance and distrust on the part of independent-minded peoples like the Croats, Open Cities like Ven-ice and the nobles of Capua and Benevento;[32] so they are unlikely to maintain intensive dominion over them for long. The Franks are, at the same time, poten-tial allies for the emperor, as the passages lifted from Procopius and Theophylact Simocatta in the *De legationibus* suggest. These characterizations, along with the likely scenario for Constantine's amassing of historical data about the Franks and his close interest in the Dalmatian coastal centres in the *De administrando*, will receive further attention in what follows. My point here is that they are consistent with Constantine's apparent indifference towards the coronation in Rome in 800. Of greater strategic and long-term ideological import to him was the accessibil-ity of Italian cities to naval vessels at Byzantium's disposal. If Constantine says nothing of the expeditions in the Adriatic of the *patrikios* Niketas or (a few years later) Paul, his tale of the joint operations of the Croat, Serb and other Slav chiefs together with 'the men of Ragusa' and 'all the cities of Dalmatia' against the Muslim emir of Bari conveys the message that the Adriatic is easily crossable.[33] He specifies that 'all these were present by imperial command (*keleusei*)' and also that the Slavs were transported to Italy by the Ragusans 'in their own vessels'. Constantine's implication is that so long as Byzantium enjoyed cooperation from the peoples and Open Cities of Dalmatia, no occupier of southern or central Italy – Franks among them – was secure, in default of Byzantine approval. And this, I suggest, is precisely why King Pippin was concerned to subjugate the Dalmatian

coastline in the early 800s. It could also be one reason for Charlemagne's wariness about associating his regime closely with the city of Rome, and for his forbearance from using the title of 'emperor of the Romans'.[34]

Byzantium, the Franks and the Upper Adriatic before Charlemagne

The eastern empire, then, possessed a formidable arsenal of Soft Power and Hard Power in the face of Charlemagne's arrival south of the Alps and installation of his offspring there, and we probably have hints of Niketas' vigorous deployment of Soft Power in Dalmatian towns – including Zadar itself – in the early 800s (below, 16 n. 69 and 123). Two propositions need to be borne in mind when considering such episodes. One is quite straightforward: Charlemagne was far from being the first Frankish warlord with whom eastern emperors had had to treat as being, in effect, a potential partner or ally. The second proposition is more contentious: that the sense of ubiquity of eastern Soft Power confronting Charlemagne in Italy was the fruit of deliberate imperial contrivances of the sixth century, rather than being just the general impression made on northerners by the abundance of monuments and other detritus left over from the Roman empire's heyday. It was not, after all, some monument picked at random but – most probably – the church of San Vitale, built and decorated by churchmen closely aligned with the eastern empire, which chiefly provided the architectural details and design for Charlemagne's church in Aachen, the very site of his acclamation by eastern envoys as 'imperator et basileus' in 812.[35]

These two propositions seem to me interconnected, in so far as Justinian, the emperor in whose reign San Vitale was completed, was trying to make an awesome impression on northern barbarians such as the Franks, realizing that their military collaboration was indispensable for safeguarding his acquisitions in the central and western Mediterranean. Well aware that this would entail constant gift giving, hard bargaining and periodic setbacks and humiliations, and even while insisting on his God-given autocracy, Justinian resorted to a variety of means of predisposing elite families in peripheral regions to cooperate, along with warlords well beyond the imperial borders. Through such projects as his much-vaunted building programme – with inscriptions describing him as a 'lover of building'[36] – Justinian laid down markers for a 'Roman' empire that could persist as a concept in the west without very much material outlay on the part of the central government or the massive garrisoning of military outposts. The nature and technical quality of the structures – fortified towns, watchtowers, churches – varied from place to place, and Procopius' gazetteer, *Buildings*, may be seen as essentially an exercise in panegyric, elaborating upon what were often small-scale refurbishments or works of low-grade craftsmanship.[37] But Justinian's intention to monumentalize the universal extent of his dominion is plain enough from, for example, the description by Procopius of building work at Ceuta, on the southern shore of the Straits of Gibraltar. The emperor had restored the fortress and 'consecrated to the Mother of God a noteworthy church, thus dedicating to her the threshold of

the empire, making this fortress impregnable for the whole race of mankind'.[38] Inscriptions dating from Justinian's era are phrased in similarly sweeping terms, for example, the Latin inscription commemorating the governor's reconstruction of the city gates at Cartagena in southern Spain in 589/590: 'may *Hispania* rejoice always for such a governor, so long as the poles turn and the sun circles the earth!'[39] Such grandiloquence implies that all Spain was under imperial sway, whereas the literary and archaeological evidence suggests a Byzantine occupation of only a limited number of enclaves, without maintenance of a garrisoned frontier against the Visigoths far inland.[40]

This sort of exaggeration seems to epitomize Justinian's approach to the west as a whole, laying claim to wide-ranging dominion from what were often quite modest footholds and in southern Spain, as in other coastal regions like Liguria, envisaging intensive commercial exchanges, and ongoing consultations between imperial officials and the senior churchmen as well as other members of the local elites.[41] The attention that Justinian's officials and litterateurs paid to extensive building works suggests that these served as a kind of 'visiting card', literally concretizing the idea of empire and drawing the beholder's attention to the emperor responsible for them. At the same time, Justinian sent lavish gifts 'to every part of the known world', according to Procopius. 'When they heard what sort of man Justinian was, [barbarians] poured into Byzantium to get in touch with him. The emperor [. . .] delighted in the whole business [. . .] day after day he continued to send them home, every one [. . .] with masses of money'.[42] This combination of gift giving and hospitality at the imperial court, along with installation of an unmistakably imperial presence by virtue of buildings, amounts to Soft Power. Justinian seems to me to have systematized recourse to it, appealing to more or less autonomous elites at various material and spiritual levels.[43]

Foremost among the politico-military elites with which Justinian dealt were the Franks, whose martial prowess, interest in Italy and independent mindedness was well known to Byzantine statesmen. Here, one may briefly take note of the forthrightness of Frankish kings in their correspondence with Justinian. Andrew Gillett has drawn attention to the letters addressed to Justinian by King Theodebert and his son Theodobald in the 530s and 540s.[44] The two letters written in the name of Theodebert are gracious in style and express his willingness to cooperate militarily. But they leave the reader in no doubt that this rests on 'friendship' and 'our mutual advantage' rather than on any obedience owed by the king to Justinian.[45] Theodobald, in his letter, even complains of Justinian's disparagement of his father's piety and draws attention to the marks of divine favour shown by 'the victories of his countless triumphs', quite probably in pointed allusion to the emperor's many setbacks in the west in the 540s.[46] In emphasizing the reciprocal benefits arising from the enlightened self-interest of each party, the Frankish kings write as partners and allies, treating Justinian with a degree of deference but not in any meaningful sense as their overlord. They certainly do not claim imperial status for themselves or characterize their relationship with Justinian as one of 'fraternity', yet their self-confident tone is comparable with that of Charlemagne's surviving letters to the eastern emperor.[47] Probably more than any other

potentates, sixth-century Frankish kings personified the 'barbarian arrogance' of which Procopius complained and with which Justinian's lavish distribution of coins, building projects and other exercises in Soft Power was trying to deal. Scattered across the west, with the exception of Gaul's southern shoreline, Justinian left reminders of his presence, even as he found it necessary to bribe and cajole the Franks and, on occasion, to beat a military retreat.

Justinian wished to reserve for himself dominion over Rome. But he also sought to establish an indelible imperial presence in the Upper Adriatic, whose significance as a resource centre and platform for diplomatic initiatives he came to appreciate.[48] At Ravenna, his officials and sympathetic bishops were, literally, building on the work of fifth-century aristocrats and of Theoderic, who had made his headquarters there and built a splendid palace with a main gate named 'Ad Calchi', evoking the Brazen Gate of the palace in Constantinople.[49] But they seem to have made sure that the images of the emperor were highly visible, alongside those of patron saints and the bishops themselves, and this practice continued after Justinian's reign. There seems no reason to regard the famous mosaics of Justinian and Theodora at San Vitale, the less famous head of Justinian at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo,[50] or the mosaic of seventh-century emperors at Sant'Apollinare in Classe,[51] as having been secluded or out of the public eye. San Vitale was not, after all, a palace church.[52] And there were probably many other such images on display in urban centres of the Upper Adriatic, even if few matched San Vitale's in quality. The overall effect was to lay down challenges to the credentials of all future prospective masters of the Po basin and of Rome, putting indirect pressure on them to come to terms with the one true emperor.

Charlemagne, images and Ravenna

This brings us back to Charlemagne and the scenario confronting him at Ravenna and, indeed, in Italy as a whole. One might speculate about his visits to Ravenna and the rationale behind his choice of spolia to solemnize his church at Aachen. Besides Einhard's mention of the removal of columns and marble,[53] there is the letter of Pope Hadrian I (772–795) to Charlemagne, authorizing him to take 'mosaic and marble and other materials both from the floors and the walls' of an unnamed palace in the city.[54] Was the mosaic merely non-figural floor mosaic, or imagery that was more politically charged? One may suspect the latter, given the removal of the statue of Theoderic to stand in Charlemagne's palace at Aachen, an affirmation that Charlemagne ruled Italy in his own right.[55] One might also usefully consider the points of eastern Hard Power or potential points for the materialization of Hard Power that impinged upon Charlemagne from nearly every direction. Links were still lively between the *stratēgos* of Sicily and one or two autonomous yet sympathetic strongholds in Liguria. At Luni, in particular, excavations have revealed a sequence of coins struck in the Sicilian mint from the seventh to the mid-ninth centuries, perhaps representing payments by the governor for services rendered, alongside commercial exchanges.[56] Small wonder that around the time of his coronation in Rome Charlemagne should have contemplated the invasion of

Sicily, or at least that the Byzantines had serious apprehensions of his intention to do so.[57] The island was an even more troublesome thorn in his side than Dalmatia, especially if – as seems likely – a direct imperial presence persisted on Sardinia longer than scholars used to suppose. Even if one rejects the statement of the well-informed Ibn Khurdadhbih that a *batriq* (*patrikios*) resided there in the mid-ninth century, Francesca Fiori has presented very strong reasons for dating the famous inscription of the consul Constantine, found at Porto Torres, to the era of Constantine V (741–775).[58] And the imperial court maintained relations with Sardinian elite families long afterwards.[59] However, instead of exploring the implications of all this, I shall return to the subject of the lingering imperial presence on the Italian mainland, the imagery of emperors, and Charlemagne's attitude towards them.

Our principal source is the *Libri Carolini*, composed for presentation before the Council of Frankfurt in 794 by Theodulf of Orleans in the name of Charlemagne. The work condemns the canons of the Second Council of Nicaea (787) concerning the nature of icons and the practice of venerating Christ and the saints through a visual medium. The subject matter was essentially theological, but it raised questions as to what figural images could convey and the meaning of respect shown to mortal emperors. The *Libri Carolini* takes on not only these issues but also Byzantine diplomatic terminology, for example an alleged description in the Council of Nicaea's canons of Irene and Constantine VI as 'co-reigning with God'.[60] St Jerome is quoted approvingly for his injunction that 'we should adore the images of emperors minimally'. And there is a laboured explanation for the Byzantine citizens' habit of greeting with candles and incense the effigies of emperors sent out to them in provincial towns: 'because they [the emperors] were not able to be everywhere, they ordered men to adore their own images, being unable to be adored in person in all places'.[61] The *Libri Carolini* treats this Byzantine practice as alien, promoted by those 'elated by the pomp of this world';[62] and, most importantly, it reflects the views of Charlemagne himself. Of this we may be sure, thanks to the investigations of Wolfram von den Steinen and Bernhard Bischoff, which the latest editor of the *Libri* has corroborated.[63] The principal manuscript held in the Vatican Library (Cod. Vat. Lat. 7207) contains marginal comments emanating from Charlemagne. The great man seems to have given a running commentary while the text was read out to him. And we may note that the arrogance of Irene and Constantine in claiming to 'co-reign with God' drew Charlemagne's very first comment. This is, unfortunately, now lost.[64] But one gains some inkling of Charlemagne's outlook from the comment on a passage describing as *res inlicita* the veneration of images of emperors in the streets and invoking St Paul to the effect that one must imitate and follow Christ (rather than emperors): *prudenter*.[65]

I am not suggesting that Charlemagne opposed icon veneration simply because the Byzantines' appetite for venerating images of their emperors was so vibrant, or in reaction to their concept of the emperor as being 'virtually' everywhere. But the concept refracts that sense of universal imperial presence which emperors seem to have fostered systematically in the west from Justinian's time onwards. And Charlemagne cannot have been unaware that public shows of respect for

imperial images were germane to the political culture of urban centres in Italy. In fact, he received a letter to this effect from Pope Hadrian in 788, reporting that the people of Naples had greeted the *stratēgos* of Sicily on his way back from Benevento 'with great respect', bearing 'standards and images', presumably a mark of loyalty towards Irene and Constantine VI.[66] I am not aware of any mention of such communal reverence for images of emperors in the Upper Adriatic region around this time. But occurrences, if not regular staging, seem likely enough, especially in view of the political culture of Dalmatian townsfolk in the mid-ninth century, as noted by the Saxon Gottschalk. Leading, or would-be leading, members of the community seem to have been eager visitors to the emperor's court at Constantinople. And the conversations Gottschalk overheard suggest fascination with procedures and parlance at court: 'We stood before [his] majesty' and 'the royalty said this to us', and 'Benevolent Lordship, have pity upon us!'[67] Talk of this sort would, I suggest, have been music to the ears of Justinian, judging by the delight in barbarians' visits ascribed to him by Procopius. By the same token, Charlemagne could well have found it jarring, and this is the background to his efforts to hinder or supervise communications with Constantinople, through occupying Venice and the Dalmatian coast.

Byzantium, the East Franks and the Upper Adriatic in the mid-tenth century

One might consider further examples of eastern Soft Power at work, noting how it swung into action against Pippin and entailed not only the bestowal of court titles on the doges Obelerius and Beatus but also, most probably, the gifts of relics of St Theodore to Venice,[68] of relics of St Trypho to the church of Kotor and of St Anastasia's relics to a cathedral rededicated to her in Zadar.[69] Indeed, there are grounds for interpreting the latter town's Church of the Holy Trinity as part of a bid to make Zadar an imperial outpost with the help of architecture, in effect a miniaturized version of eminent Constantinopolitan churches. But these issues have received attention in recent publications and feature elsewhere in this volume.[70] So, by way of a conclusion, I shall return to the writings of Constantine VII and the light they shed on Byzantium's geopolitical calculus for the Upper Adriatic: awareness of the interconnections among this region, the Franks, nomadic peoples in Pannonia, the Alpine passes and, ultimately, lordship over the city of Rome (see above, 4–5). One must emphasize that the texts covering these regions and topics incorporated in the *De legationibus* attest a certain continuity in Byzantine calculations, extending far beyond the Carolingian Franks' comings and goings. I shall focus on the geopolitical background around the time of the excerpting, noting both the changes opening up in the mid-tenth century and variations on familiar themes. Underlying them all is Constantine VII's awareness of the role of Soft Power in preserving imperial interests in the Upper Adriatic – and in Rome.

What, then, was the background to the compilation of the *De legationibus*? Setting aside issues like the consolidation of the structures of Croatian and other

socio-political elites, the vigorous church building on the part of notables and the commercial upswing of Venice,[71] I shall merely point out that, by the mid-tenth century, Byzantine hopes of regaining a hegemonic role in the central and even western Mediterranean appeared brighter than for some while, bearing comparison with the outlook in ruling circles early in the ninth century.[72] Imperial links with the leading families of Sardinia were quite close and, as Vivien Prigent has shown, a substantial expeditionary force was operating on Sicily towards the year 940, with an eye to bringing the island back under the *basileus*' dominion.[73] Its failure did not immediately discourage Constantine from his earlier view of Calabria and Sicily as a single administrative unit, while acknowledging that the city of Rome was no longer imperial.[74] From such a perspective, proclamation of an alternative imperial regime encompassing the city of Rome would be as unwelcome as it was absurd.

However, by the later 940s, a robust new grouping, the East Franks under Saxon leadership, was showing signs of close engagement with Italy and, equally significantly, of stemming the Hungarians' incursions into German-speaking territories.[75] By 951 the East Franks were, under the leadership of King Otto's brother, Duke Henry of Bavaria, going on the offensive, raiding the Hungarians' pasture-lands on the Middle Danube. Since the eastern passes of the Alps are relatively low, they were more convenient to use than any other ones for the Hungarians, as they had been for mounted archers like the Huns in the fifth century and later for the Avars. A geopolitical scenario reminiscent of the opening years of the ninth century now began to emerge. Much as Charlemagne's victories over the Avars enabled him to focus more closely on Lombardy, the Veneto and beyond, Otto could contemplate more ambitious forays there once he no longer had to reckon with serious Hungarian assaults on his eastern flanks.[76] Final removal of this Hungarian distraction occurred only with Otto's destruction of the Hungarian leadership at Lechfeld in 955, a few years after work ceased on the *De administrando*.[77] But while Constantine was composing his text and supervising compilation of the *De legationibus*, Otto made his intentions plain enough, assigning Aquileia (Friuli) and Verona to Duke Henry and, in 951, sending his first request for the imperial crown to the pope.[78]

Without any mention of Charlemagne's coronation or the events of 808–812, Constantine's *De administrando* focuses on the geography and local politics of the Upper Adriatic. Perhaps these seemed to offer more valuable lessons in strategy for curbing Frankish dominion in Italy, and hence the quite full description of Venice's islands and settlements,[79] along with the details about Dalmatia's coastal cities' defences and history, and the islands and sailing conditions there.[80] The nearest comparison in terms of topographical detail are the descriptions of the abodes of the Pechenegs and the strategically important north coast of the Black Sea together with freshly gathered data, including place names and natural hazards, about the Dnieper Rapids, where nomads in the emperor's employ could deter the Rus from raiding Constantinople.[81] Venice and the Upper Adriatic were, I suggest, likewise of great strategic significance now that the Hungarians were losing their capacity for diverting the East Franks from interventions south of the

Alps. It may be no coincidence that, besides the anecdotes about the resistance of the Croats and the Venetians to the Franks, Constantine's *De administrando* offers details of the Croats' 'galleys and cutters'. May it not have been with an eye to Croatian sea-power's potential for obstructing another onrush of Franks that he remarked upon its decline?[82]

Not that the Franks were all bad in Constantine's eyes. His attitude was ambivalent. The extracts in the *De legationibus* highlight their military value as allies. And the *De administrando* refers admiringly to Charlemagne's martial prowess (above, 5). Constantine probably now envisaged some form of liaison with the East Franks, on the lines of what had been contemplated by Byzantine rulers in Charlemagne's era – a marriage tie, with court eunuchs sent ahead to instruct the bride-to-be in Greek. Ekkehard of St Gall relates as much, with his tale of the betrothal of an emperor named Constantine to Duke Henry of Bavaria's daughter. Constantine would have intended Hadwig for his son and heir Romanos, not for himself (as the story has it).[83] But Ekkehard's statement that a Byzantine artist was commissioned to paint the girl seems unlikely to be sheer invention. I am not claiming a precise analogy between this demarche and the proposals of marriage ties in play between Charlemagne's court and Byzantium. Henry was not even king of the Franks, let alone *imperator*. Yet the geopolitical dynamics were perhaps not so very different. The emperor was in quite close contact with Hungarian chiefs around 950,[84] as Byzantium's rulers probably had been with the Avars in the 790s.[85] Constantine may well have resigned himself to the onset of the Franks, in view of their recent successes against the Hungarians, and who better to do a deal with than the new master of Aquileia, Henry?[86]

This marriage proposal came to nothing, but it seems to illustrate the interconnections in Byzantine thinking between the Franks, the Upper Adriatic, the city of Rome (with its imperial connotations) and potential counterweights to the Franks. In the category of counterweights could be numbered not only the Avars and the Hungarians, the Venetians and the Croats (as outlined in the *De administrando*) but also the elites of the Dalmatian towns. It may be no coincidence that the fullest account of churches, and their patron saints and relics, in the *De administrando* is for these towns, including Zadar.[87] It does not seem too bold to suggest that Constantine was contemplating gifts to some of these shrines, whether of the type that he sent to the patriarch of Jerusalem in 947, icons of the sort he sent to St Catherine's monastery on Sinai, or perhaps yet more relics, in the manner of earlier emperors' despatch of Sts Trypho and Anastasia in the early ninth century.[88] At any rate, in Constantine's description of Dalmatian towns' cults we may discern glimmerings of Soft Power in play, in expectation of another onrush of Franks. Constantine was signalling the existence of overlapping circles even as he tried to turn this to his empire's advantage.

Aachen 812: A solemnized standoff

The problem was – and is – that where geopolitical circles overlap, total harmony is elusive, and a treaty cannot do much more than paper over the fault-lines.

The settlement represented by the Treaty of Aachen was agreed by the Carolingian court on the basis of rather incomplete – if not misleading – information,[89] and the various local elites, city fathers and interested regional and 'apostolic' hierarchs had agendas of their own to pursue vigorously.[90] Yet in so far as the treaty amounted to a solemnized standoff, flexible enough to allow for tensions while providing for the main parties' core concerns, it was worth the effort and had valuable side effects. Among the latter one may account the fact that the Venetians' commerce, whose early signs of promise had aggravated the Frankish-Byzantine confrontation, could now burgeon forth.[91] And given the difficulty of resolving conflict that involves territorial claims in the modern era, this is no mean achievement.[92]

Notes

 1 See Shepard 2017.
 2 For the delineation in and shortly after 812, see the chapters by Majnarić, Štih, Ančić and Gračanin in this volume. For 1945 see, for example, Harbutt 2010, esp. ch. 7, 'The Yalta Disorder', 280–330; Plokhy 2011, 137–51, 380–82. On spheres of influence of great powers in the modern era, and on territorial disputes arising between them and between their protégés among local hierarchies, see, e.g. Choucri and North 1975; Hensel 2000, 58–61, 77–81; Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Lemke 2002, 54–57, 70–71, 89, 92–97, 148–60, 197–200.
 3 Nye 2004, 5–18, 55–68, 90–115; Nye 2007. See also Lukes 2007; Wilson 2008; Hayden 2012, 27–31, 35–39, 46–50, 62–65.
 4 For the course of events, see the chapters by Ančić, Štih, Sophoulis, Ziemann, Skoblar and Gračaninin in this volume.
 5 Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556. See also Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 385.
 6 For the appeal and political value of eastern Christendom to churchmen in Aquileia, for example, see the chapters by Cerno and Dzino in this volume.
 7 Charlemagne, *Diplomas*, no. 197 (May 801), 265; no. 198 (September 802), 266; Hartmann 2010, 214.
 8 For the Council of Frankfurt, see above, 10. For Charlemagne's patronage of the shrines of the Holy Land, see McCormick 2011, 163–81, 195–96; on Charlemagne's diplomatic exchanges with the Abbasid caliph, see Borgolte 1976, 45–61, 77–83; Borgolte 2014; Drews 2014, 88–91. See also the chapter by Ančić in this volume.
 9 Garipzanov 1999, 202, 208, 212–15; Coupland 2005, 223–24, fig. 9 on 225, 226–27. See, in particular, Airlie 2014, 215–16, 224.
10 *GHI* ch. 27, ed. Pertz, 621; ed. and trans. Tremp, 370–71. See also *FiF*, 182–83 and n. 351; Nerlich 1999, 108, 269. See also the chapters by Ančić and Majnarić in this volume.
11 Reinert 1998, 140; Korobeinikov 2008, 699; Bosworth 2010, 42.
12 *ARF* s.a. 812, 136; *CarCh*, 94–95; Nerlich 1999, 180–81, 266. See also Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 385; Chrysos 2013.
13 See, for example, the chapters by Gračanin, Budak and Vedriš in this volume.
14 Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 385. Charlemagne mentions the 'uniting' and 'pacifying' of the 'holy [. . .] Catholic church' without intimating a very similar process of unification of the ancient Roman empire. Instead, he refers to 'peace' (*pax*) now being attained 'inter orientale atque occidentale imperium'. His choice of terminology implies the continued existence of what are two discrete polities rather than the reunification of a single entity, taking *imperium* to mean 'empire' (as the context suggests). For a different interpretation, with emphasis on the potential ambiguities, see the chapter by Ančić in this volume.

15 Shepard 2006, 43–45; Shepard 2011; Shepard 2014.
16 Constantine VII, *De thematibus*, 94; Shepard 2014, 26. For the power structures of mid-tenth-century Rome, see now Wickham 2015, 23–25, 188–94.
17 *ARF* s.a. 809–810, 127, 130; *CarCh*, 89, 91. See also AD, 132; Nicol 1988, 16; Borri 2010a, 48–53. On Cephalonia's strategic significance, see the chapter by Ančić in this volume.
18 Instances concerning the Upper Adriatic region include the wedding feast staged by Basil II (976–1025) for the doge's son, John Orseolo: JD[1], 168, and the bestowal of relics on Kotor and Zadar, perhaps by the *patrikios* Niketas (see below, n. 69).
19 See, especially, the chapters by Štih, Sophoulis, Ziemann, Skoblar, Dzino and Gračanin in this volume.
20 *DAI*, ch. 26, 108, lines 5–6.
21 See above, n. 9; Grierson 1981, 910–11; Classen 1985, 91–97; McCormick 2008, 417, fig. 28 on 418.
22 *DAI*, ch. 26, 108, lines 8–10.
23 With an eye to the Croats' martial prowess yet ineligibility for offensives on behalf of imperial diplomacy, Constantine notes that they 'will not fight foreign countries outside the borders of their own' (*DAI*, ch. 31, 148, lines 31–32). See also his account of Frankish brutality towards the Croats, their revolt and the eventual expulsion of the Franks, at some undetermined period: *DAI*, ch. 30, 144, lines 80–87. Constantine insists that the Croats had never been subject to the Bulgars and notes Boris-Michael's failure to 'make any headway' in the only war fought between the two peoples, see *DAI*, ch. 31, 150, lines 60–64. For the Venetians' resistance to Pippin, see *DAI*, ch. 28, 120, lines 20–43. The message they allegedly sent Pippin is all the more suggestive of Constantine's calculations for being (most probably) apocryphal: ' "We want to be servants of the emperor of the Romans, and not of you" '.
24 *DeLeg*, 108–11, 119–20, 500 (from Procopius). On the mass of disparate texts at Constantine's disposal, see Sode 2011, 168, 175–76.
25 *DeLeg*, 582–83 (Priscus).
26 *DeLeg*, 487 (Theophylact Simocatta).
27 *DeLeg*, 56–57 (Polybius).
28 *DeLeg*, 73, 76–77 (Zosimus).
29 *DeLeg*, 195–98, 454–59, 471–77 (Menander Protector).
30 Even the most extensive narrative, the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, recounts Charlemagne's coronation and exchanges with Empress Irene succinctly, and has nothing to say about Venice or the Upper Adriatic region for that era: Theoph., 472–73, 475; commentary and translation in *CTC*, 649, 653–54. On the limited amount of source materials available to Constantine himself, see Ševčenko 1992, 189–93.
31 *DAI*, ch. 30, 144, lines 81–82. The episode forms part of a passage that may stem from Croatian oral tradition. But that one should be mindful of the Franks' capacity for aggression is also one of the morals of the *De administrando* (*DAI*, ch. 28, 120; ch. 31, 152).
32 By means of an apocryphal tale featuring Louis II and the emir of Bari, Constantine illustrates the mutual distrust of Frankish rulers and the elites of towns like Capua and Benevento: *DAI*, ch. 29, 128–34, lines 126–216.
33 *DAI*, ch. 29, 128.
34 Charlemagne did not designate himself as *imperator Romanorum*; see Hartmann 2010, 214.
35 That San Vitale, a double-shelled octagon, was imitated by the 'palace church' at Aachen seems likely, for all the controversy concerning the interrelationship between the design and structure of San Vitale and the church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus, built by Justinian in Constantinople. Apparently, the latter was begun around the same time as San Vitale and so could hardly have served as its model. But the similarity between the two churches is patent. The church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus, at least, had strong imperial connections, even if San Vitale itself did not constitute a 'palace church': Deliyannis 2010, 230–31. One should not rule out some inspiration for the Aachen church

from the rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, in whose churches Charlemagne took undeniable interest: Korn 2014, 272–73 and 376 n. 49; McCormick 2011, 192. However, Charlemagne's use of building materials from Ravenna is well-attested, and San Vitale would have provided the most readily available model of a church at once imperial and, perhaps, evocative of Jerusalem. See below, nn. 53, 54. Moreover, his palace hall may also have drawn on Byzantine designs by way of Pope Leo III's *aula* in the Lateran: Grewe 2014, 168–72.

36 Feissel 2000, 83 and n. 8, 84–86, 93 and n. 103, 100 and n. 150; Elsner 2007, 39–49.
37 See Cameron 1985, 109–12; Elsner 2007, 49–50. Procopius was unquestionably reporting current projects, and he amplified his text with references to the most recent works of fortification: Montinaro 2012, 104–07.
38 Procopius, *Buildings* VI.7.15–16.
39 Prego de Lis 2000, 383.
40 Ripoll López 2001. See also the qualifications to Ripoll López's minimalist approach by Wood 2010.
41 Wood 2010, 307–09, 316–19; Murialdo *et al*. 2011, 30, 32, 51–54, 67–76.
42 Procopius, *Secret History* XIX.13–15.
43 Shepard 2014, 14–16.
44 See Gillett 2019 forthcoming.
45 *Epistolae Austrasicae*, no. 19, 132; no. 20, 133. I follow the chronology proposed by Professor Gillett in the presentation on which his forthcoming article is based.
46 *Epistolae Austrasicae*, no. 18, 132; Gillett 2019 forthcoming.
47 On Theodebert's presumptuousness in striking gold coins in his own name, see Leppin 2011, 275. See also, on Theodebert's intervention in Italy of 539, and a souvenir taken back to the north by a Frankish warrior, Seibt and Koch 2015, 343.
48 Ravenna's fall to Belisarius was unexpected and owed more to Belisarius' shrewd, on-the-spot assessment of the Goths' lack of supplies and vulnerability than to Justinian's sense of strategy, judging by Procopius' account (*Wars* VI.29.1–39). Belisarius had benefitted from the arrival of an expeditionary force from Dalmatia, led by Vitalius, the *magister militum per Illyricum*: Procopius, *Wars* VI.28.2; Ravegnani 2004, 107–08.
49 Deliyannis 2010, 120, 56–57. See also Johnson 1988, 85–87.
50 Deliyannis 2010, 173–74 and fig. 57.
51 Deliyannis 2010, 271–72 and fig. 97.
52 Deliyannis 2010, 231.
53 *VKM*, 30–31.
54 *CodCar*, no. 81, 614; Deliyannis 2010, 298.
55 Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis*, 259–60; Deliyannis 2010, 297. On the various connotations of the transfer of Theodoric's statue, see Bredekamp 2014, 279–80, 285–87.
56 Murialdo *et al*. 2011, 76–77.
57 These apprehensions are reported in Theoph., 475; *CTC*, 653.
58 Fiori 2001; Cosentino 2004, 344–46, 353.
59 See below, n. 73.
60 *LibCar*, 105.
61 *LibCar*, 403.
62 *LibCar*, 403.
63 *LibCar*, 48–50 (introduction).
64 *LibCar*, 49 and nn. 334, 335 (introduction); 109, line 11 and d2.
65 *LibCar*, 400, lines 15–18 (see 1 Corinthians 11.1).
66 *CodCar*, no. 82, 616, line 16.
67 Gottschalk, *De praedestinatione* IX.6, 208. See Borri 2010b, 23–24.
68 Nicol 1988, 15–16; Borri 2010a, 47–48; Carile 2011, 646–47. For the relics of St Theodore, see Osborne 1999, 375–78.
69 See Osborne 1999, 377–79. See also above, 13.
70 Ančić 2014, 73–74, 78–80. See also the chapters by Ančić, Dzino and Budak in this volume. Such architectural grandeur would have been in keeping with the aspirations

of Zadar's prelates, if (as seems likely) some of them attained archiepiscopal status in the early ninth century: see the chapter by Vedriš in this volume.

71 See, for example, Nicol 1988, 35–37; Ančić 2005, 221–22.

72 See the chapters by Sophoulis and Ziemann in this volume.

73 Cosentino 2004, 344–51, 353. See also Prigent 2010, 73–83; Shepard 2014, 20–21.

74 Constantine regards rule by the emperor in Constantinople as an innovation (*kainotomia*), contrasting with the days when '[the city of] Rome was governed by an emperor (*ebasileueto*)': Constantine VII, *De thematibus*, 94. See also *DAI*, ch. 50, 236, lines 88–89; Prigent 2010, 64, 72–73, 84.

75 For Otto's mounting interest in affairs in Italy and Burgundy in the 940s, in continuation with Carolingian tradition, see Zielinski 2008, 97–98, 106–07.

76 *FiF*, 299; Bowlus 2002, 47, 51–52. See also Reuter 1991, 161; Bowlus 2006, 77, 89, 104–05.

77 The traditional dating of between 948 and 952 for composition of the *De administrando* has not undergone significant challenge: *DAI*, 11 (Introduction).

78 Widukind of Corvey's depiction of Otto as uninterested in a visit to Rome at that time may well be misleading: *Res gestae Saxonicae* III.9, 134–35; Zielinski 2008, 106–07. See also Reuter 1991, 168–70; Laudage 2001, 167–71; Bowlus 2006, 75–76; Becher 2012, 167–68.

79 *DAI*, ch. 27, 116–18, lines 75–96; ch. 28, 120, lines 47–51.

80 *DAI*, ch. 29, 134–38, lines 217–95.

81 *DAI*, ch. 37, 166–68; ch. 42, 184–88; ch. 9, 58–60. Constantine's apprehensions about the Rus receive attention in Shepard 1999, 269, 271–73, 275–77. For the personal and 'Constantinople-centred' nature of Constantine's approach to geography, see now also Magdalino 2013, 37–38.

82 *DAI*, ch. 31, 150, lines 80–82.

83 Ekkehard, *Casus Sancti Galli*, ch. 90, 184–85. On this apparent betrothal initiated by Constantine, datable to 949 or shortly thereafter, see Schreiner 2011, 768 no. 42; Becher 2012, 173; Prinzing 2017 forthcoming.

84 *DAI*, ch. 40, 176–78, lines 35–68; Stephenson 2000, 40–41; Shepard 2004, 118–19.

85 See the chapter by Gračanin in this volume.

86 On the strategic importance of Aquileia in relation to Hungarian raiding, and the Ottos' consequent patronage of its patriarch, see Schmidinger 1986, 306–09.

87 *DAI*, ch. 29, 134–36.

88 Riant 1881; Weitzmann 1976, 94–98, plates xxxvi–xxxvii; Pratsch 2011, 62–63; Shepard 2012, 508. For Constantine's mention of the relics of St Trypho in Kotor and St Anastasia in Zadar, see *DAI*, ch. 29, 136, 138, lines 268–70, 275–76, and above, 11.

89 See the chapter by Ziemann in this volume.

90 See the chapters by Ančić, Štih, Skoblar, Cerno, Dzino, Gračanin, Betti, Komatina, Basić and Vedriš in this volume.

91 As Airlie (2014, 215) notes, Charlemagne was, in effect, conceding that Venice belonged to Byzantium's sphere. See also the chapters by Gelichi, Majnarić and Štih in this volume.

92 Hensel 2000, 59–61, 79.

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Part I

The Franks move east

2 The Treaty of Aachen

How many empires?

Mladen Ančić

The question: 'International treaty' or 'internal deal'?

The Treaty of Aachen commemorated in this volume is an ambiguous subject for modern historiography. In English-speaking scholarship it is rarely called by that name: historians tend to speak of it as the Treaty of 811 or 812 or simply refer to negotiations that lasted from 810 to 813. It is usually seen in the context of foreign relations and as a triumph of sorts for Charlemagne, who was now at least half-heartedly recognized as 'imperator et basileus' by the Byzantine court.[1] Scholars of Venetian history take a different stance: they acknowledge the importance of the provisions reached through negotiations between the emperors of east and west in 811 and 812, at least with regard to the lagoons of Venice.[2] In my own field of Croatian historiography, the Treaty of Aachen has an illustrious and privileged position. It is traditionally regarded as one more piece of evidence, and a very valuable one at that, that 'we [Croats] are part of the west', whatever this may mean for those who use the paradigm.[3] A closely connected school of thought sees the Treaty of Aachen as having a complementary and yet different significance, interpreting its provisions as instrumental in bringing to life the political unit known in the historiography as 'Byzantine Dalmatia'.[4] This has become the main standpoint for those who advocate a strong and enduring Byzantine influence, at least in the cities on the Adriatic shore that were the part of 'Byzantine Dalmatia'.

It is not my aim here to take sides nor to analyse or refute the complex historiographic traditions strongly connected with nineteenth- and twentieth-century political ideologies. Instead, I will try to answer various questions that seem interesting from a different point of view: namely, what generated the conflict that was resolved through prolonged negotiations resulting in a formal treaty? What was the nature of this treaty, and what did it mean for those who negotiated it? What were its consequences for those who lived in the Adriatic basin in the ninth century, and how did it influence the political configuration of the region then? What interests me is whether the conflict and the treaty that ended it were 'international'. In other words, did the treaty regulate relations between two different political bodies, or was it an 'internal deal', a way to find a modus vivendi for two parts of one and same political body, namely the Roman empire?

The road to Charlemagne's coronation and the role of Empress Irene

From the point of view of the participants, the inquiry must start with noting that the negotiations that culminated in the signing of a treaty in Aachen in 812 and its subsequent ratification in Constantinople in 813 lasted for more than a decade and were closely tied to Charlemagne's imperial coronation in Rome on Christmas Day 800. However, it is difficult to discern the subjects and arguments actually used during the negotiations from the precious little we know, which comes mainly from what Einhard in his *Life of Charlemagne* and the author or authors of the *Annales regni Francorum* decided to record.[5] As regards a narrative sequence that forms the background of the conflict and negotiations, it seems best to start in 798 with the overtures from the court of Empress Irene (797–802) to Charlemagne, including the offer of a formal imperial title.[6] The line of reasoning in interpreting this offer pursued by Ralph-Johannes Lilie and Johannes Fried finds echoes in one of Alcuin's letters dated to June 799.[7] In this letter, Alcuin first thanks Charlemagne for the news, delivered by messenger, of Pope Leo III's troubles in Rome. It is obvious from the third sentence, however, that the messenger not only delivered news about the pope's fate, but he would also seem to have spoken about a plan being hatched by the king in connection with the pope's troubles. In response, Alcuin wishes Charlemagne success with what he has started: 'optime incepistis, sed melius consummastis'. The next sentence is a warning that the church is in disarray and ruin, not only through the actions of ordinary folk, but also through those of the highest social echelons. Since this is of concern for the whole Christian community, it is obviously connected with the king's plan, which is precisely why the utmost care must be exercised: 'quod metuendum est valde'. Alcuin finally reveals who is involved and what the plan entails:

> There have hitherto been three persons of greatest eminence in the world, namely the Pope, who rules the see of St Peter, the chief of apostles, as his successor – and you have kindly informed me of what has happened to him; the second is the Emperor who holds sway over the second Rome – and common report has now made known how wickedly the governor of such an empire has been deposed, not by strangers but by his own people in his own city; the third the throne on which our Lord Jesus Christ has placed you to rule over our Christian people, with greater power, clearer insight and more exalted royalty than the aforementioned dignitaries. On you alone the whole safety of the churches depends. You punish wrong-doers, guide the straying, console the sorrowing and advance the good.[8]

When these words are read in conjunction with Irene's offer, of which Alcuin must have been aware, they can be seen as a simple rationale for the imperial coronation, as well as rendering almost literally the title that would shortly be assumed by the newly crowned emperor, although Alcuin uses the term 'gubernator imperii' rather than 'Romanum gubernans imperium'.[9] All of which helps to

explain why, sometime later, Alcuin was not in the least surprised to receive the news of Charlemagne's imperial coronation in Rome.[10]

This is of relevance, since it supports the interpretation of Charlemagne's coronation as a carefully staged act, one that resulted from a fully developed concept of the entire Roman empire as a Christian community.[11] All of our extant contemporary sources – the *Kölner Notiz*, Alcuin's letter and the *Annals of Lorsch* – with their insistence on the 'Byzantine connection', point to the same conclusion.[12] However, later sources such as the *Annales regni Francorum* and Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* are ambiguous. This is either the result of a later reinterpretation of the coronation's meaning, reflecting negotiations by then accomplished with the Byzantine court,[13] or it is the result of Einhard's authorial strategy, wanting to portray his hero as fully deserving of his imperial position.[14] But even the later sources retain something of the original intent. The *Annales*, rewritten years after the event, still states that Empress Irene sent messengers to Charlemagne's court in order to *confirm* the existing arrangement, described as 'peace' (*pax*), in 802.[15] The wording, probably preserved from the original text, indicates that the 798 offer had been accepted and more or less formalized, thus only requiring confirmation in 802. Einhard himself suggests the same, within his framework of Charlemagne's worthiness. He states that the Byzantine emperors who reigned after Irene – Nikephoros I, Michael I and Leo V – were suspicious of his hero's imperial title, fearing that Charlemagne 'wanted to snatch from them the highest authority and command'.[16]

Irene's fall and Charlemagne's seizing of opportunities in the Adriatic

Reflecting his real power as an early medieval ruler, Charlemagne's imperial coronation had immense potential for the development of various mythologies – dynastic, nationalistic and even pan-European. In reality, it was first and foremost the result of a specific series of events: notably the deposition of Constantine VI by his mother Irene and his subsequent death, and the turmoil in Rome which resulted in the flight of Pope Leo III.[17] The mere fact that the imperial court in Constantinople offered Charlemagne an imperial title suggests that there was at least some knowledge about the king of the Franks' ambitions within certain Byzantine ruling circles.[18] Later developments confirm that the circle surrounding Irene was well informed, but the outcome of the offer in terms of Charlemagne's rise to an imperial position still relied heavily on Irene's precarious position in Constantinople. The term 'precarious position' needs some clarification. During her reign Irene had at her disposal and dispensed large sums of money, despite 'the considerable corruption and inefficiency on the part of the tax collectors and other officials and widespread tax evasion by the rich'.[19] That she was overthrown by her finance minister suggests that money was the prime lever of Irene's reign, at least in Constantinople. In the provinces, the death of Duke Eric of Friuli near the 'maritime city of Tarsatica' (modern Rijeka in Croatia), then the main Byzantine naval outpost in the Kvarner (Quarnaro) Gulf, shows that Irene's control there was

equally shaky. While the Frankish army under Eric's command was en route to Pannonia, marching across territory that was supposedly friendly and controlled by formally allied imperial forces, it was ambushed by the inhabitants of Tarsatica, and Eric was killed.[20] In hindsight, this point proves that the whole enterprise was not as well thought out as it seemed. When Irene was finally deposed in 802, during the stay of Charlemagne's envoys in Constantinople, the situation changed profoundly. The new Emperor Nikephoros I (802–811) was nevertheless apparently disposed to negotiate, and even sent his envoys to regulate and renegotiate existing relations. The envoys were received by Charlemagne, and a certain 'pactum faciendae pacis' was drafted in written form and given to them, but no answer came back from Constantinople.[21]

It was now Charlemagne's turn to prove that the coronation was not merely the result of a specific series of events and that behind his title there lay real imperial power, capable of taking on a direct challenge. He chose the Adriatic as his theatre of operations. Charlemagne's son Pippin, king of Italy, soon started campaigning against the remaining Byzantine maritime outposts in the Veneto and further down the Dalmatian coast. With luck on his side, he was able to engage directly with substantial Byzantine forces, prompting Constantinople to send its fleet into the Adriatic on several occasions. Seen from the centre of Charlemagne's empire, the war in the Adriatic was a success: the mobilization of the local fleet was crowned by Pippin's acquisition of the province of Veneto in 810 and plans for an ensuing expedition to Dalmatia. Yet it is not always easy to determine what really happened, and why, in this complex newly formed theatre of operations. As regards why, it would seem that one of the underlying reasons for war was control of the emporia in this part of the northern Adriatic. These had gained real importance in the eighth century and had consequently become a vital resource for the political centre.[22] Pippin's initial strategy, as far as it is discernible from the sequence of operations, was to cut Venice off through the conquest of maritime Dalmatia. As early as 804, during the Diet of Rižana, representatives of the Istrian 'civitates et castella' brought before the Frankish imperial representatives a whole series of charges against their duke, John, complaining among other things that he had forced them to take their ships on unspecified missions to Venice, Ravenna and Dalmatia, and even up and down the riverways.[23] Pippin's mobilization of the local ships in the northern Adriatic seems to have been successful, as far as Dalmatia was concerned: so much so that in 805 the new Venetian doges, Obelerius and Beatus, organized their own naval expedition to regain control of the Dalmatian coastline.[24] It seems that this Venetian intervention failed, forcing the doges into submission and making them journey to Aachen, together with the local *dux* and the bishop of Zadar.[25] Pippin's own plan failed, however, and whatever he had achieved was lost after the arrival of the imperial navy in the Adriatic in 806: a clear demonstration of what Jonathan Shepard has termed Byzantine 'Hard Power'.[26]

Byzantium and the Franks at war in the Adriatic, 810–811

From this point on the Carolingian forces changed tactics, and when Pippin next tried to reach the lagoons in 810, he approached from the mainland. His forces

succeeded in what seems to have been an amphibious operation to gain a foothold on one of the sandy shoals, but they were stopped there and driven back.[27] A few months later Pippin suddenly died, changing the whole dynamic of the confrontation. The war on the Adriatic is not the focus of the *Annales regni Francorum*, which primarily records engagements with the Byzantine imperial forces, including the navy sent from Constantinople;[28] but it was described in more detail and from a different angle by the Venetian chronicler John the Deacon in his *Chronicon Venetum*.[29] From the materials John assembled in written form two hundred years later, it is clear that Pippin was either entangled in – or made use of – local quarrels to improve his position, but was not really able to subdue the small archipelago around Rivoalto which would eventually become Venice.

The whole affair was more serious than one might suppose from the *Annales*, while the full imperial context is clear from modern reconstructions, such as that by Donald Nicol.[30] The broad spectrum and seriousness of the Byzantine presence on the eastern and northern Adriatic can be glimpsed from casually recorded facts, such as those surrounding the rebellion of Bardanes Tourkos in Anatolia.[31] Despite its short duration, the rebellion – which lasted only fifty days – had consequences even for this far-off corner of the empire and led to the destruction of the outpost of Tarsatica in the Kvarner Gulf. Although John the Deacon had at his disposal certain ninth-century written sources and takes note of the rebellion, it seems he was not aware that its centre was in Anatolia. Thus he states that Bardanes' forces only managed to destroy Tarsatica.[32] John's confusion, and the conclusion he draws from the story, gains credibility in light of Vivien Prigent's dating for the formation of the theme of Cephalonia.[33] If the theme was formed in the 760s and functioned thereafter as the main platform for Byzantine control of the Adriatic, it is reasonable to assume that such an administrative framework could easily suffer reverberations from a rebellion in distant Anatolia, with local rebels exploiting the Byzantines' focus elsewhere. This also dovetails nicely with what the Istrians had to say at the Diet of Rižana about Byzantine rule and how it functioned before the Franks came.[34] Finally, and in a similar vein, a strong Byzantine presence in Dalmatia is discernible from the remark that, on their return from Persia, Charlemagne's envoys somehow managed to sneak unnoticed through the Byzantine naval outposts on the Adriatic. The fact is recorded as a curiosity in the *Annales*.[35]

In the absence of an overarching narrative in our sources, such scattered information as we have points to the Byzantine political centre having at its disposal an organized and functional administrative network that covered the eastern and parts of the northern Adriatic littoral, at least in the second half of the eighth century. This also sheds light on the transformation of power structures in the eastern Adriatic hinterland in the course of the conflict,[36] with the development of an entirely new, Carolingian-sponsored structure, whose primary objective was to put pressure on the Byzantine administration. This new power structure started out with small-scale warrior bands, but soon took the form of a vassal dukedom which was headed by a warrior chief, Borna, who held the official, imperial title of 'dux Dalmatiae (et Liburniae)', as recorded in the *Annales* for the first time in 819.[37] It seems that the Carolingians provided not only the 'hardware' for the development of this new power structure – in the form of arms and equipment

for Borna, his retinue and the warrior aristocracy – but also the 'software', in the form of organizational schemes for the rule they imposed, as well as the first steps towards Christianization, led by missionaries mostly from northern Italy.

Peace-making, 810–812

Charlemagne's state, governed in the Adriatic by his son Pippin, thus showed a capacity for protracted, large-scale mobilization and coordination of resources in order to attain certain political aims. Pippin's forces and bases were both strategically located – on the Italian mainland, in the hinterland of the Venetian lagoons, in Istria and inland from the Dalmatian coast – and deployed in complex ways.[38] It can safely be assumed that this was known to the Byzantine court of Nikephoros I. As noted, Constantinople was forced to send the imperial fleet to the Adriatic no fewer than three times in six years, and it was precisely for this reason that negotiations were resumed in 810. It seems that at first Nikephoros was not prepared to engage directly with Charlemagne's court, preferring to send his envoy, the *spatharios* Arsaphios, to Pippin. However, Pippin died before Arsaphios reached him, and the envoy was rerouted to Aachen. There he explained the reasons for his mission and the peace offer prepared for the original recipient, Pippin. Charlemagne accepted the offer and showed his good will by giving up the recently conquered province of Veneto to seal the peace. At this point, the spirit of the negotiations was far from being amicable, despite the fact that in 811 Charlemagne even threw in the old Byzantine defector, Leo *spatharios* from Sicily, as a bonus. Leo had spent ten years under his tutelage and was now willing to go back home, just like Obelerius, the Venetian doge, who was later stripped of his title and finally sent to Constantinople.[39]

Arsaphios' mission seems to have been the real turning point in relations between Aachen and Constantinople. From then on, negotiations ran smoothly despite Nikephoros' death in July 811. Charlemagne's envoys, dispatched early that year, remained in Constantinople for almost six months until the new emperor, Michael I (811–813), acceded to the imperial throne in October and formally accepted their offer of peace. But the treaty had to be formally drawn up and ratified in Aachen then delivered to Michael's envoys, who had travelled there with Charlemagne's embassy.[40] One of the Byzantine envoys was Arsaphios, promoted in the meantime from *spatharios* to *prōtospatharios*,[41] and thus a member of the Constantinopolitan Senate along with his fellow envoy, the *prōtospatharios* Theognostos. The titles of the Byzantine envoys were duly recorded in the *Annales*. They were also specified in Charlemagne's letters to the Byzantine emperors. It is thus reasonable to assume that members of the Frankish court knew how to interpret the subtleties and messages encoded in the envoys' ranks. From the end of the eighth century, Byzantine imperial envoys to Francia usually bore the title of *spatharios*.[42] The fact that the embassy of 812 was led by two men with the rank of *prōtospatharios* clearly signals the solemnity of the occasion.[43]

The formal ceremony was probably held in the Palatine Chapel in Aachen, where Charlemagne himself handed over the written and signed text of the treaty.

Upon receiving it, Michael's envoys played their part by delivering 'in their way, meaning in Greek, a solemn speech of praise addressing him as the emperor and *basileus*'.[44] Like the *Annales*, the description of the ceremony in Charlemagne's letter to Michael provides scant information; but it does at least give us the information that the emperor himself as well as 'his priests and princes' signed the treaty and handed it over from the altar.[45] 'Liturgical acclamations' for the ruler (*laudes regiae*) were a recent innovation in the Carolingian church at the time, while knowledge of Greek was rare, even in Charlemagne's court.[46] However, there must have been someone present who was capable of translating the Greek envoys' words, and it is fairly certain that they did not offer *laudes regiae*. It is more likely that they delivered an encomium of Charlemagne.[47] Even in its pared-down form, the description indicates a solemn series of acts that could be understood as 'ritual' – writing the treaty; signing it; laying the parchment on the altar; handing it to participants; speeches – an impression reinforced by their enactment in the sacred space of the church and before an audience who clearly understood their meaning.[48] Perhaps crude and undeveloped in comparison with the diverse imperial rituals of the Byzantine court, this series of acts nevertheless mirrored and symbolized the complex ideas about the world order that Alcuin had expounded some fifteen years earlier.[49]

The connection with Alcuin's ideas about the 'three persons of greatest eminence in the world' seems stronger in view of the fact that the series did not end at the royal chapel in Aachen. After their stay there, Michael's envoys started their journey home; but they stopped off in Rome and there enacted another series of acts that were probably similar. This time it was Pope Leo III who handed them a copy of the treaty.[50] The whole, protracted 'ritual' reached its climax in the following year, when Charlemagne's envoys arrived in Constantinople, where they found the new emperor Leo V (813–820). Charlemagne expected the same series of acts to be carried out in Constantinople, the only change being that the treaty would now be translated and written in Greek.[51]

What the treaty entailed

The contents of the treaty remain obscure. As noted, it took the form of a booklet, but the stipulations it contained are unknown. However, the principal ideas behind the treaty may be inferred, since they were probably the same as the ideas expounded in the opening sentences of Charlemagne's letter to Emperor Michael. They portray a world in which Christ has chosen Charlemagne and Michael to be emperors; where through God's will and the will of these two emperors, it would finally be possible to attain peace between east and west, by then so long desired. To see his church united and at peace was of the utmost importance to Christ, who had always governed and protected his church throughout the world.[52]

Of crucial importance here is the interpretation of the word *imperium*. Does it imply a territorial unit of governance, in which case we are confronted with the idea of two empires? Or does it mean 'of the highest authority': one politico-religious unit divided by two emperors, a polity identifiable as the Christian

Roman empire? The word certainly has multiple and ambiguous meanings in contemporary texts 'depending on the context in which it was employed'.[53] But here the context is quite straightforward: Charlemagne and Michael have the highest authority in *one world empire*, whose prime function is to provide the peace and security necessary for the proper functioning of the church and the means of salvation. In this world of ideas there is no place for *two different empires*. This is clear even at the level of the two emperors' titles: they both govern one and the same Roman empire. The Treaty of Aachen's achievement was that, from this point on, they were able to govern the empire in a coordinated way, with the territorial reach of their respective administrations properly defined.[54] That this arrangement was supported by the church can be seen from the fact that Michael's envoys in Rome took up the 'pacti seu foederis libellum' from the hands of the pope.

If we accept this interpretation, we may draw a further conclusion about the treaty's contents: that it offered some form of territorial demarcation between their respective spheres. In my opinion, remote echoes of such a demarcation may be found in Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*, specifically in Chapter 15. Here Einhard writes about the aggrandizement of territory under Charlemagne's rule (*regnum Francorum*) and then spells out the names and even geographical locations of all the provinces his hero had conquered. At one point he describes the part of Italy conquered by Charlemagne and states that it reached to lower Calabria 'where the frontiers of the Greeks and the Beneventans firmly remain'.[55] Although Einhard's wording does not conclusively refer to the treaty, the 'pacti seu foederis libellum' presumably provided at least a brief description of the territorial demarcation in southern Italy. A second passage in the same chapter provides a more convincing connection between the Treaty of Aachen and the territorial demarcation between two imperial administrations. Upon arriving in Dalmatia, Einhard recounts that his hero 'forced [it] to submit, except for the coastal cities; they were, for the love and because of an alliance he made with the emperor of Constantinople, given up to him'.[56] This is definitely not an exact reference to the stipulations of the treaty, but the same strategy can be perceived as was the case of southern Italy: a very vague definition of a wider geographical area with specific points, such as 'frontiers' and 'cities', identifiable only to those with 'local knowledge'.

However, it is in Dalmatia that implementation of the Treaty of Aachen's territorial arrangements can be seen with some clarity and further analysed to understand how the system drawn up by the treaty functioned in reality at the interstices of what was purportedly one and the same empire. In the entry for the year 817 in the *Annales regni Francorum* there is a longish note on the arrival of a Byzantine ambassador at the court of Emperor Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's only surviving son and heir.[57] The Byzantine diplomat had a clear-cut mission: sorting out the territorial problems that had arisen from the treaty's implementation. Although not explicitly stated in the entry, it is highly probable that these centred on the coastal city of Nin (Aenona), which had not been handed over to Byzantine administration as the treaty stipulated.[58] The key parties in the dispute were Borna, duke of Dalmatia, and the Byzantine governor (*archōn*) from nearby Zadar,[59] and the failure to resolve matters had prompted the latter to seek help from Constantinople.

The Byzantine court presumably realized fairly swiftly that the problem could not be resolved without the intervention of its western counterpart, and so an ambassador was sent to Aachen seeking assistance from Louis' imperial court. The western emperor showed willing, but according to the *Annales*, the man whose responsibility this was supposed to be – Cadolah, duke of Friuli – was not at hand.[60] The Byzantine ambassador therefore had to wait for Cadolah to be summoned to the imperial court. When he finally arrived, negotiations between him and the ambassador quickly came to a dead end: neither Cadolah nor Louis and his representatives were willing to get involved in what they obviously saw as the petty problems and local interests of the *Dalmatini* – whether *Romani* or *Sclavi*.[61] The only way to resolve the issue was to send both the Byzantine ambassador and Cadolah to Dalmatia together, in order to involve the people whose interests were at stake in the negotiations. The emperor even made a gesture of goodwill in the spirit of cooperation and sent a certain Albgarius as his personal representative. From this point on the story trails off, and later developments cannot be traced. But since the city of Nin was never handed over to the Byzantine authorities, we can safely assume that the local powers were strong enough to resist intervention from the two political centres.

To sum up, at the interstices of the renewed empire local problems had to be resolved locally. The imperial centres would act only if this was not possible, and even then they did not act directly. It is important to note that the complaints of the Byzantine *archōn* were sent to Constantinople, and from Constantinople they were channelled by way of a special ambassador to another imperial court. Even there, the courtly administration was not responsible for solving the problem: that was the job of the Frankish frontier governor, 'ad quem illorum confinium cura pertinebat'.[62] It was Cadolah and the Byzantine ambassador who initiated negotiations, but it seems to have been unanimously agreed that they needed input in situ from the locals – both the warrior chief who headed the Frankish vassal dukedom and members of the local elite from the Byzantine side. Despite a somewhat hazy end to our story, it seems safe to conclude that local powers generally prevailed, unless a case interfered with interests vital to the political centres.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasize how deeply the image of the Roman empire remained entrenched in the minds of western European elites in the eighth and ninth centuries. So much so that, after 798, Charlemagne was quick to grab the opportunity and proclaim himself emperor, his coronation being performed by Pope Leo III.[63] Once emperor, he was ready, willing and able to show resolve in negotiating his imperial title, even if it meant war with Constantinople. This resolution, coupled with his capability to deploy enormous resources, finally led to an agreement formalized in the Treaty of Aachen. Through this act, at least in the eyes of the court elites on both sides, the Roman empire was reconstituted as a polity ruled from two imperial centres. In reality, however, there were two different and totally autonomous imperial systems: that of the Byzantines, with its long tradition and

strong Roman roots, and that of the Franks. The latter, as Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes and Simon MacLean have convincingly argued, had coalesced only recently into a firm and relatively durable imperial structure; it differed radically from the Byzantine system and retained only thin Roman roots.[64]

For the opening decades of the ninth century, the two imperial centres acted for the most part in a spirit of mutual respect and support.[65] For their denizens, the treaty was the framework for a peaceful modus vivendi until the 830s: then internal political dynamics on both sides began to render the treaty redundant. The result of this process is clear in the famous exchange of letters between Louis the German, king of Bavaria, and Basil I in 871, which retains no trace whatsoever of the spirit of the Treaty of Aachen.[66] In a sense, the treaty was a failure: it left no discernible institutions in its wake, at least nothing that would make historians take an interest in it.

Notes

1 This is how the events spanning the years 810 to 813, including the signing of the 'treaty' in Aachen in 812 and then in Constantinople in 813, are described in recent works; see, for example, Costambeys *et al.* 2011, 168; McKitterick 2008, 281. It is noteworthy that these authors do not use the word 'treaty', probably to avoid the obvious associations with modern agreements between superpowers hinted at in the chapter by Shepard in this volume. See also Anne Latowsky (2013, 34), who omits the year 812 and includes the curious statement that 'a pact was signed in 813'; and Matthias Becher (2003, 96) who, although not Anglophone, is more or less in the same vein. Michael McCormick does speak about the signing of a treaty, although he does not refer to it as the 'Treaty of Aachen': *OEE*, 139, 256.

2 Roberto Cessi sees the treaty, without calling it the 'Treaty of Aachen', as no more and no less than 'il primo e fondamentale statuto di tutela della provincia veneta': Cessi 1944–1946, vol. 1, 32. Donald Nicol (1988, 19) states that 'the question of territorial rights over the Byzantine provinces at the head of the Adriatic was discussed and settled in detail' before everything else during the negotiations in Aachen in 812. He also thinks that 'the text of the treaty', which he does not refer to as the 'Treaty of Aachen', in its final form 'provided a clearer definition of where the frontiers lay and how they would affect the passage of travellers and goods and the payment of customs dues'.

3 The best example of this attitude is a book that was widely distributed and read: Dabinović 1940, 62–64. The same basic idea formed the intellectual background to a conference entitled somewhat oddly 'Croatian Archaeology and the Treaty of Aachen, 812' [Hrvatska Arheologija i Aachenski Mir, 812], held in Zadar a few months after the event which led to the current volume. The conference programme and abstracts are available at: <www.unizd.hr/Portals/0/znanstveni_skupovi/Hrvatska%20arhe ologija%20i%20Aachenski%20mir%20-%20program%20i%20sazetci%20izlaganja. pdf> [last accessed 13 June 2016].

4 Whether or not it was termed the 'Treaty of Aachen', this agreement was seen as instrumental in the formation of 'Byzantine Dalmatia' by the father of Croatian scholarly historiography, Franjo Rački (2009, 9, 19), an idea that was further elaborated by, for example, Nada Klaić (1975, 172–73).

5 *VKM* and *ARF* are not the only sources used to gather knowledge on the wide subject of the conflict and negotiations between the Frankish political centre and the Byzantine imperial court at the beginning of the ninth century. A range of other sources are usually consulted and cited, but it is clearly difficult to produce a coherent, overarching narrative from facts gathered from texts, documents and artefacts of diverse genres and formats. Despite ample warnings about the pitfalls of such a procedure (see, e.g.,

Collins 2005, 53–55; Costambeys *et al.* 2011, 161–66), there are recent narratives, including those by Becher 2003, 7–17, 81–97; Heather 2013, 207–47.

6 For the best discussion of this offer, see Lilie 1996, 205–10; Fried 2001, 308–10. Both authors start with the so called *Kölner Notiz*, note the precariousness of Empress Irene's position, and infer that this unusual offer was an attempt to improve matters. That the offer was delivered through the highest-ranking embassy ever to visit Charlemagne's court, 'Michahel patricius quondam Frigiae', adds weight to this interpretation. Michael's name and dignity are registered in the *Annales* (*ARF* s.a. 798, 104); however, his mission, apart from delivering the letter sent by Irene, is stated somewhat ambiguously as 'tantum de pace'.

7 Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 174, 288–89.

8 'Nam tres personae in mundo altissime hucusque fuerunt: id est apostolica sublimitas, quae beati Petri principis apostolorum sedem vicario munere regere solet; quid vero in eo actum sit, qui rector praefate sedis fuerat, mihi veneranda bonitas vestra innotescere curavit. Alia est imperialis dignitas et secundae Romae saecularis potentia; quam impie gubernator imperii illius depositus sit, non ab alienis, sed a propriis et concivibus, ubique fama narrante crebrescit. Tertia est regalis dignitas, in qua vos domini nostri Iesu Christi dispensatio rectorem populi christiani disposuit, ceteris praefatis dignitatibus potentia excellentiorem, sapientia clariorem, regni dignitate sublimiorem. Ecce in te solo tota salus ecclesiarum Christi inclinata recumbit. Tu vindex scelerum, tu rector errantium, tu consolator maerentium, tu exaltatio bonorum': Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 174, 288, lines 17–27; English trans. Allott 1974, 111. A partial translation of the text is also given in Becher 2003, 93–94.

9 For Charlemagne's first imperial title rendered in the written form, and the suggestion of a 'trans-Alpine' tradition as its source, see Classen 1952, 118.

10 In the letter addressed to Charlemagne's sister, Abbess Gisela, and her daughter Rotrud, Alcuin briefly comments on the coronation, stating 'gratias Deo agens de exaltatione excellentissimi domini mei David': Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 214, 358, lines 24–25.

11 Peter Heather argues quite convincingly in the same vein: Heather 2013, 242–47.

12 The *Kölner Notiz* is dated to the period between 798 and 805, while its author definitely had access to information concerning Charlemagne's court: Fried 2001, 309–10. Alcuin's letter is from 799. The *Annals of Lorsch* are, in this sense, quite direct: 'quia iam tunc cessabat a parte Graecorum nomen imperatoris, et femineum imperium apud se abebant, tunc visum est [. . .] ut ipsum Carolum [. . .] imperatorem nominare debuissent': *Annales Laureshamenses* s.a. 801, 38. According to Rosamond McKitterick, the *Annals of Lorsch* were composed in 803 'as an alternative and independent history of the Franks': McKitterick 2004, 109. It would seem that the *Annals*' author was aware that circumstances had changed, and that by the time of writing the Byzantines once again had their own emperor, which would explain his use of the temporal 'iam tunc'.

13 McKitterick convincingly argues that the portion of the *Annales* covering the last fifteen years of Charlemagne's life (799–814) was rewritten after 817: 'the emphasis has shifted away from Charlemagne himself and is placed more on a style of explicitly imperial rulership with the palace as the centre of affairs, the acknowledgment of his power and renown': McKitterick 2008, 51. Given that the act of coronation as sole *imperator* of the Roman empire had a different meaning from what had been negotiated with the Byzantines in 812 – a shared imperial title – it becomes clear why reinterpretation of the story was necessary.

14 This was achieved by presenting Charlemagne as a person who 'could not help but become emperor [. . .] because God willed it': Heather 2013, 243.

15 'Herena imperatrix de Constantinopoli misit legatum nomine Leonem spatarium de pace confirmanda inter Francos et Grecos': *ARF* s.a. 802, 117.

16 'propter susceptum a se imperatoris nomen et ob hoc quasi qui imperium eis eripere vellet, valde suspectum': *VKM*, 20. My translation of the word *imperium* follows the argument expounded in van Espelo 2013, 272.

17 That the coronation fell on 25 December 800 – which, according to Eusebius' calculations, was the first day of the year 801, or 6001 years after the birth of Christ – played well among those of Charlemagne's subjects who subscribed to eschatological ideas, and there surely were some; but this was not decisive in the issue. On this, see Palmer 2011.

18 Janet Nelson (1987, 157) points out that 'strictly contemporary Frankish sources suggest that Charlemagne had been thinking in imperial terms, and developing Aachen as a residence to rival Constantinople, before 800'; she later elaborates what the 'developing of Aachen' entailed (Nelson 2001). It is unlikely that the Byzantine court would have missed these signals, given their well-developed information networks, or that they could have failed to decipher them. For more on these networks see McCormick 1994, 48; *OEE*, 211–36.

19 *BR*, 125–26.

20 On the circumstances of Eric's death, although with some misinterpretations, see Ross 1945, 226; Labus 2000. For an alternative interpretation, see below 65, 210.

21 The exchange of embassies is duly recorded in *ARF* s.a. 802 and 803, 117–18. When the negotiations were finally resumed after seven years, Charlemagne sent a letter to Nikephoros reminding him of the unanswered peace offer in quite acerbic tones. See below, n. 39.

22 On the rise in the importance of emporia in the northern Adriatic in the eighth century, see Gelichi *et al.* 2012; the chapter by Gelichi in this volume. See also McCormick 2007; McCormick 2012. That war was fought over the emporia is confirmed by the attack of the Byzantine fleet on Comacchio in 809: *ARF* s.a. 809, 127.

23 'ambulamus nauigio in Venetias, Rauennam, Dalmatiam et per flumina, quod nunquam fecimus': Petranović and Margetić 1983–1984.

24 'predicti duces navalem exercitum ad Dalmaciarum provinciam depopulandam destinaverunt': JD[1], 102, lines 3–4.

25 *ARF* s.a. 806, 120–21.

26 See above, 4–7.

27 Although at first sight the reports of the 810 assault in the *Annales* and in John the Deacon's chronicle appear to differ widely, on closer inspection the difference is one of viewpoint. Both reports (*ARF* s.a. 810, 130; JD[1], 104, lines 5–15) speak of Pippin's success and his use of maritime force. The *Annales* emphasizes the fact that Pippin subdued the *province* of Venetia, capturing the *duces*, and then used his fleet to attack Dalmatia. John the Deacon also reports his assault on the 'province' ('ad Veneticorum provinciam capiendam'), describing the amphibious operations that brought the Carolingian forces to the sandy shoal ('cum magna dificultate portus, qui dividunt insularum littora, pertransisset'), only to highlight their final defeat there.

28 See, for example, *ARF* s.a. 806, 122; s.a. 807, 124; s.a. 809, 127; s.a. 810, 130.

29 JD[1], 100–07.

30 Nicol 1988, 14–19.

31 For Bardanes' rebellion, see *BR*, 131–33.

32 'solum Tarsaticam destruere potuit': JD[1], 100, lines 14–19.

33 Prigent 2008, 398–401.

34 On the Diet of Rižana and Byzantine rule in the region, see the chapter by Štih in this volume. For a good overview of the historiography, see also Levak 2007, esp. 79–83; Borri 2010b.

35 'legati, qui dudum ante quattuor fere annos ad regem Persarum missi sunt, per ipsas Grecarum navium stationes trensvecti ad Tarvisiani portus receptaculum nullo adversariorum sentiente regressi sunt': *ARF* s.a. 806, 122. The sentence comes after information about the imperial fleet sent from Constantinople: 'classis a Niciforo imperatore [. . .] mittitur'. It is clear that the term *stationes* covers what would today be called naval bases, outposts serving as logistical bases for the fleet, and making it astonishing

that the envoys were not detected as enemies. Yet the story is clearly told verbatim, probably by the envoys themselves. The Byzantine administrative network that connected all of these *stationes* is discussed in Prigent 2008, 405–06. In some respects, this contradicts Einhard's oft-cited statement in Chapter 15 of his *Life of Charlemagne* about the handing over of the Dalmatian *maritimas civitates* to the Constantinopolitan emperor (*VKM*, 18). Although *stationes* and *civitates* were clearly different in nature, it is impossible to discuss the issue at length here.

36 See Ančić 1997; Ančić 2001; Budak 1997; Borri 2008; Borri 2010a; *BSBC*, 175–218. See also the chapter by Majnarić in this volume. The question of whether this transformation was connected with Carolingian operations in Pannonia and the migration of a new warrior population remains open.

37 The entry gives the title of a certain Borna as 'dux Dalmatiae' (*ARF* s.a. 819, 151), although it omits his ethnic title as irrelevant from the imperial point of view; by his death in 821, Borna's title was 'dux Dalmatiae atque Liburniae' (*ARF* s.a. 821, 155). The complex issue of Borna and his subjects' ethnic identity is beyond the scope of this chapter, although the articles referred to in n. 36 above touch upon the subject. See also Curta 2006, 134–47.

38 On the Carolingian ability to organize warfare, see Bachrach 2001.

39 Information on the negotiations with Constantinople, like everything else concerning relations with Byzantium, is recorded in the *Annales* under the years 810 and 811 (*ARF* s.a. 810, 132–33; s.a. 811, 133–34). What is unusual is that the letter carried by Arsaphios on his return to Constantinople has also been preserved: Charlemagne, *Letter to Nikephoros*. It is clear that relations were still strained, judging by the acerbic comments that the envoy had been sent to Pippin rather than to Charlemagne and the length of time it had taken Nikephoros to respond the proposed peace treaty of 803. The letter's bitter tone is quite different from the later, edited entry in the *Annales*, written in friendlier terms. Relinquishing the province of Veneto, described in the entry as an act of goodwill and imperial magnanimity, was probably one of the conditions necessary to reach compromise.

40 The *Annales*' entry for the year 812 covers in two sentences the sojourn of Charlemagne's envoys in Constantinople and change of Byzantine emperor: *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

41 McCormick notes Arsaphios' journey from Constantinople via Pavia (or Verona) to Aachen in 810, and his intervention 'in the internal government in Venice', but overlooks the second journey to Aachen in 812: *OEE*, 529, nos 296, 297, 299 and 300 on 896–97. He discusses at length the career of another member of the 812 embassy, Bishop Michael of Synada, who had also participated in Nikephoros' embassy of 803: *OEE*, 175–81. Both Nicol and Treadgold note Arsaphios' two journeys, as well as his promotion to the rank of *prōtospatharios*: Nicol 1988, 18–19; *BR*, 179.

42 For example, Leo (*ARF* s.a. 802, 117) and Arsaphios (*ARF* s.a. 811, 133). As noted above (n. 6), the (special) envoy in 798 was the *patrikios* Michael; while in 803, the one envoy who was not a cleric was the lowly 'Calistus candidatus' (*ARF* s.a. 803, 118). On the hierarchy of Byzantine court titles, see Kazhdan 1991.

43 Arsaphios' social standing was boosted even more in the eyes of Charlemagne's envoys when they reached Venice in the late autumn of 811 en route to Aachen. There, it seems, a formal ceremony was staged handing over the province of Veneto to the Byzantines, when Arsaphios, acting as an imperial official, formally deposed the doges Obelerius and his brother Beatus. The story is recorded by John the Deacon, who, from his eleventh-century perspective, insists on the autonomous action or at least participation of the Venetians: 'nuntius Constantinopolitanus, nomine Ebersapius, Venetiam adivit et Veneticorum consilio et virtute hoc peregit' (JD[1], 105, lines 19–24). Both Obelerius and Beatus were captured by Pippin in spring 810, but it seems that only Obelerius was detained in Aachen. However, after the Veneto was ceded to Nikephoros

in October 810, Obelerius left Aachen in early spring of the following year, together with Charlemagne's embassy bound for Constantinople. He was probably detained with his brother in the (still Frankish) Veneto until the arrival of the new Byzantine mission. According to the most plausible interpretation of the wording in the *Annales*' entry ('propter perfidiam honore spoliatus Constantinopolim ad dominum suum duci iubatur': *ARF* s.a. 811, 134), after the deposition Beatus was confined to Zadar while Obelerius was sent to Constantinople and delivered to 'his master', Emperor Michael I.

44 The whole ceremony is laconically rendered in a single sentence in the *Annales* : 'Nam Aquisgrani, ubi ad imperatorem venerunt, scriptum pacti ab eo in ecclesia suscipientes more suo, id est Greca lingua, laudes ei dixerunt, imperatorem eum et basileum appellantes': *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

45 'nostra propria quam et sacerdotum et procerum nostrorum subscriptione [. . .] a sacrosancto altari tuae manus porrectione': Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556, lines 22–23, 25. These acts constituted the ratification of the treaty, and through them it became 'valid' (*roboratus*), creating a mutual set of obligations for the participating parties and committing them to act as prescribed.

46 On *laudes regiae*, see Nelson 1987, 153–54. For knowledge of the Greek language at this time, see Wickham 1998, 247.

47 On encomia, see Jeffreys and Kazhdan 1991; Dennis 1997.

48 Early medieval 'ritual' is the subject of an interesting discussion, which is summed up in Garipzanov 2008, 10–13. I follow Gerd Althoff's definition (2002, 71–72), who states that rituals occur 'when actions, or rather chains of actions, of a complex nature are repeated by actors in certain circumstances in the same or similar ways, and, if this happens deliberately' while 'actors and spectators act in the consciousness of being bound to a given scheme, which does not, however, prevent the ritual from having the desired effect'.

49 For an overview of the diverse ritual acts which constituted Byzantine court culture, see Maguire 1997. For the 'diplomatic' (in the modern sense of the word) rituals of this culture, see Shepard 1992, 45–57.

50 The description of the detour to Rome completes the account of the solemnities connected with the treaty of 812: 'Et revertendo Romam venientes in basilica sancti Petri apostolic eundem pacti seu foederis libellum a Leone papa denuo susceperunt' (*ARF* s.a. 812, 136). The word *libellum* suggests that the treaty took the physical form of booklet.

51 These expectations are clearly stated in Charlemagne's letter addressed to the emperor Michael (Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556, lines 23–26), who had in the meantime renounced the imperial throne and entered a monastery. The new emperor, Leo V, accepted all the obligations arising from the arrangements negotiated with Michael and fulfilled them in a way that enabled further, uninterrupted communication, as stipulated in the treaty. This does not mean that the formal, solemn acts did not fit in with Byzantine imperial ritual; it simply indicates that the expectations of Charlemagne's envoys were fulfilled. One of them, Bishop Amalarius of Metz, whose journey to Constantinople is examined in the chapter by Vedriš in this volume, hints at the solemn procedures at Leo's court in his poem *Versus marini*, but confines his description to the evening when the speeches about Charlemagne were delivered in front of the emperor: Amalarius, *Versus marini,* 428, lines 46–50.

52 'qui nos ineffabili dono benignitatis suae in tantum divites efficere dignatus est, ut in diebus nostris diu quaesitam et semper desideratam pacem inter orientale atque occidentale imperium stabilire et ecclesiam suam catholicam sanctam et inmaculatam, quae toto orbe diffusa est, iuxta cotidianas ipsius postulationes sicut semper regere ac protegere, ita etiam nunc idem in nostro tempore adunare atque pacificare dignatus est': Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556, lines 7–11.

53 van Espelo 2103, 279–80.
54 It is in this context that Doge Obelerius was 'dispatched to his master' in Constantino-
    ple after the province of Veneto was ceded to the 'eastern emperor'. Charlemagne was
    ready to acknowledge the difference between the two halves of the empire, even at the
    level of their governance. For example, he recognized and fully accepted that the Con-
    stantinopolitan Senate comprised a body of *patricii*, just as he expected Michael to add
    the subscriptions of 'sacerdotum patriciorumque ac procerum' to the Greek version of
    treaty: Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556, line 24. Charlemagne had no pretension
    that his 'half' of the empire would have a parallel institution, and he speaks about add-
    ing simply the subscriptions of 'sacerdotum et procerum nostrorum' to his version of
    treaty: Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556, lines 22–23.
55 'usque in Calabriam inferiorem, in qua Graecorum ac Beneventanorum constat esse
    confinia': *VKM*, 18, lines 11–13.
56 'Dalmaciam (in deditionem suscepit), exceptis maritimis civitatibus, quas ob amici-
    tiam et iunctum cum eo foedus Constantinopolitanum imperatorem habere permisit':
    VKM, 18.
57 *ARF* s.a. 817, 145.
58 The city of Nin and its Christian population survived the calamities of the seventh and
    eighth centuries. For the archaeological excavations carried out in Nin over the last
    twenty-five years, see Kolega 2014, 28; Kolega forthcoming. However, by the start
    of the ninth century, a sizable pagan population had appeared, whose members were
    buried in a large cemetery outside the city. The cemetery was situated on a nearby sand
    reef called Ždrijac, where 341 graves have been excavated: Belošević 2007. The two
    communities lived side by side until the process of Christianization eliminated pagan-
    ism in the ninth century. I am grateful to Dr Kolega for providing a copy of her paper
    before publication.
59 On Zadar's status at this time and its elevation to the seat of the *archōn*, see Ančić
    2014.
60 One of the duties of the dukes of Friuli was to control the power structure which
    emerged in the eastern Adriatic hinterland during the war led by Pippin between 803
    and 810: Werner 1980.
61 It is quite clear in this instance how members of the Carolingian elite saw the world
    through Roman eyes. The *Annales* use very specific terminology: the inhabitants of the
    Roman province of Dalmatia are all *Dalmatini*, but they could also be labelled Slavs
    (*Sclavi*) or Romans (*Romani*). A few decades later, the theologian Gottschalk of Orbais
    states that Dalmatia is a 'very huge region' inhabited by *homines Dalmatini*, including
    even 'Latins' who are the subjects of 'Greek authority': 'homines Dalmatini, perinde
    id est similiter homines Latini Graecorum nihilominus imperio subiecti [. . .] per totam
    Dalmatiam longissimam reuera regionem'. However, when he describes the confronta-
    tion between the populations subjected to different political authorities, they become
    'Slavs' and the 'Greek nation', as in 'Tripemirus rex Sclauorum, iret contra gentem
    Graecorum': Gottschalk, *De praedestinatione* IX.6, 208; *Responsa de diversis*, 169;
    cited in Rapanić 2013, 40, 35.
62 *ARF* s.a. 817, 145.
63 A similar argument is propounded by Werner 1998, 13–17.
64 Costambeys *et al*. 2011, 172–94.
65 The entries in the *Annales* paint such a picture, without going into detail: *ARF* s.a. 814,
    140–41; s.a. 815, 143; s.a. 821, 155; s.a. 824, 165; s.a. 827 and 828, 174. Elsewhere,
    the contemporary Byzantine historian Theophanes refers to Charlemagne as *basileus*
    after 812, albeit adding 'of the Franks' to clarify: Theoph., 494; *CTC*, 678. This is usu-
    ally interpreted as a way to belittle Charlemagne's title, but more careful consideration
    is necessary at this point. If Charlemagne was indeed 'emperor of the Franks' even in
    his own eyes, then Michael was naturally 'emperor of the (Byzantine) Romans', and

both governed (*gubernantes*) one and the same Roman empire. The term 'Frank' at this point did not necessarily indicate a feeling of superiority on the part of the Byzantine Romans. For the complicated issue of Byzantine self-perception and their relation to the 'other', i.e. 'barbarians', as well as for the special status of 'Franks', see Page 2008, 42–52. The overall atmosphere of cooperative relations can also be seen in the material collected in Wickham 1998, 251–53.

66 On this exchange of letters, see Wickham 1998, 253–54.

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3   *Aemulatio imperii* and the south-eastern frontier of the Carolingian world

Ivan Majnarić

Introduction

In his 2003 discussion of the impact of the late Roman empire on the transformation of many *gentes* into *regna*, Evangelos Chrysos drew on earlier work on the concept of *imitatio imperii* in order to formulate the concept of *aemulatio imperii* as an advanced stage of *imitatio*.[1] He broadened the methodological framework, drawing on research into *imitatio imperii* in the late Roman and Carolingian periods, most notably that of Hayo Vierck and Ingo Gabriel.[2]

Chrysos singled out three phases of this phenomenon, which he noted are 'merely indicative of processes that follow different paths with different speed'[3] and which can be summarized as follows. The *first phase* was characterized by the military attractions of the Roman empire. It offered individual members of the *gentes* an insight into the organization of the imperial army and, following this, into the empire's structure and how it operated at the administrative level.[4] This led individuals from the *gentes* to acquire an affiliation of sorts and even to feel solidarity with the Roman world. The *second phase* was defined by a deeper bonding of the *gentes* with the everyday social and economic life of the empire. This involved acceptance of Roman legal and social concepts through, for example, the regulation of barbarian settlements, connection with the Roman system of control and coercion, trade and the transport of food stuffs and missionary work, and led to an extensive nexus of kinship between Roman elites and those of the *gentes*. In Roman eyes, this could only be achieved through a standardized form of political discourse; while to the *gentes*, this meant the acceptance of the Roman model of government and the shaping of their *regna* in accordance with *imitatio imperii*.[5] The *third and final phase* was the creation of the so-called *leges barbarorum*. As Chrysos saw it, the existence of a functioning legal system represented a necessary impetus for a maturing state. Once reached, this stage of development would present an advanced form of *imitatio* which could then be called *aemulatio imperii*. In essence, emulation equated to creating a reality which was analogous to the Roman one, claiming equality and the slow overshadowing of the Roman model through articulation of a critical ideology.[6]

The concept of *imitatio imperii* has been successfully applied to late-eighth-century relations between the Franks and their north-eastern Slav neighbours, especially the Abodrites and Veleti.[7] It can also be applied to the south-eastern frontiers

of the Carolingian realm in the late eighth century, but with one important difference. Historical developments in the ninth and tenth centuries – and the eventual formation of the kingdom of Croatia and Dalmatia – mean that this relationship should be interpreted not as *imitatio* but as the more advanced *aemulatio imperii*. Although the various phases in the Carolingians' relationship with the *gentes* on their north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers were similar, even identical, the final outcome was nonetheless different: the advanced form of *imitatio imperii* never materialized among Polabian *gentes* of the north-east in the early Middle Ages.

Viewed in a broader, medieval context, the concept of *imitatio imperii* can be seen whenever 'superior' and 'inferior' cultures or social systems interacted with one another. To a certain degree, it goes hand in hand with the process of 'othering'.[8] As modern research has demonstrated, this process of 'othering' can also be seen clearly during the early Middle Ages, especially along the fringes of the Carolingian world.[9] I shall return to this issue later.

When it comes to applying the concept of *aemulatio imperii* to the late eighth century, it is reasonable to suggest that in eastern and south-eastern Europe the role of the late Roman empire was played by the Carolingian world and that of the barbarians by the emerging *gentes*. It is also worth noting that Chrysos himself identified the final goal set by the Franks to be *translatio imperii* – a somewhat different stage from *aemulatio*, but probably of equal value to the peripheral *gentes*.

This chapter will take the concept of *aemulatio imperii* as one of its conceptual frameworks and apply it to the context of the south-eastern frontier of the Carolingian world in the late eighth century and first half of the ninth century, including the Treaty of Aachen. The focus of attention will be on those parts of the south-eastern frontier entrusted to the perpetual care of the dukes of Friuli. Unlike the less hostile parts of this frontier (as well as Bavaria and the Eastern Marches), this was a region where geography played a critical role. Beyond the safety of the Carnic and Julian Alps in the north and east (probably the region called *Mons regis* by Paul the Deacon),[10] the shortest route to the great Pannonian plain from Friuli runs through the Postojna Gate (and further along the Ljubljanica river), which is the only accessible pass through the Carnic and Julian Alps.[11] From here, to the east the road leads to the Pannonian plain, whereas to the south it leads to the eastern Adriatic coast, cutting through the more accessible ranges of the western Dinaric Alps. This geographical situation greatly affected the Franks' ability to administer the frontier, and the area weathered constant Frankish efforts to remedy this until the empire's dissolution, as well as the existence of imperial satellite regions beyond its frontier. As I will detail in what follows, it is not impossible that peripheral *gentes* endured in certain geographic areas, whose size depended on a numbers of social factors. This is clearly to be seen in the region of the western Dinaric Alps, where the area of Frankish influence corresponds to a geographically benign, albeit narrow, zone stretching from Carniola to Byzantine Dalmatia.

I shall first consider the position of Charlemagne and the Franks towards the Byzantine empire in the light of the Treaty of Aachen, before examining Frankish influence on the *gentes* or the principalities emerging along the south-eastern frontier of their world. Finally, I shall examine the applicability of *aemulatio imperii*

and the process of 'othering' to this time and place.[12] My premise is that the influence of the Carolingian world was of utmost importance for the formation of ethnic identity along the empire's south-eastern frontier. Indeed, the unique position of the territory beyond this frontier as being of interest to both the Carolingians and the Byzantine empire seems to have had further influence on the formation of ethnic identity in the region.[13]

The function of Aachen

Although Charlemagne's motives for staging his imperial coronation on Christmas Day in 800 are hotly debated,[14] historians agree on the intensity of Frankish concerns about Byzantine perceptions of them and imperial policy towards western Europe in general.[15] This was particularly apparent in those parts of the Mediterranean accustomed to a Byzantine presence. In fact, it has been suggested that the coronation was intended to bolster Charlemagne's claim to territories that were beyond his reach, especially those in Italy.[16]

Apart from the usual distinctions between the two empires – profoundly rooted in relations characteristic of the 'othering' processes – the point at which their spheres of influence clashed was the Adriatic, especially its northern part.[17] Indeed, there are indications that Frankish influence was felt on the eastern Adriatic coast as early as the 780s and that it reached as far as Kotor.[18] It would seem that after his triumph over the Avars in 796,[19] and with the Byzantine throne essentially vacant in 797, new possibilities opened up for Charlemagne. Of course, the coronation of 800 had wider implications and resonances. In the first decade of the ninth century it led first of all to a lively diplomatic relationship with the Byzantine empire, then to open, armed conflict, which at times included the Bulgars and the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid,[20] before finally opening up possibilities for reconciliation and even some kind of Frankish-Byzantine anti-Bulgar military cooperation.[21]

Although this eventually resulted in the 812 Treaty of Aachen and a modus vivendi between the two empires, it would not be too far-fetched to assume that, on the whole, Charlemagne was more intent on gaining Byzantine recognition of his imperial status than on territorial acquisitions in the northern Adriatic.[22] As Frankish sources claim, envoys of Emperor Michael I (811–813) obtained a written treaty from Charlemagne and afterwards, in Greek, 'laudes ei [Charlemagne] dixerunt imperatorem eum et basileum appelantes'.[23] Of course, this meant that the disputed territories of Venice and coastal Dalmatia were finally under Byzantine authority, while Frankish influence was evident only in the hinterland.[24] It would appear that any territorial leverage gained by the Franks during their confrontation with the empire was annulled by the treaty, while the division of lands established on the eastern Adriatic can be seen as a setback for Frankish territorial claims.[25]

It therefore seems reasonable to ask whether territorial losses were of really grave concern to the Franks. To answer this question, one needs to look at the emerging principalities on the south-eastern frontiers of the Carolingian world.

By reviewing social processes there one comes to a better understanding of how – in Frankish eyes – regardless of its territorial losses, the Treaty of Aachen could be seen as a winning situation. This also brings me to the way in which the concept of *aemulatio imperii* can be applied to the area beyond the south-eastern frontiers of the Carolingian world.

Frankish governors, swords and aspirational peripheral elites

Frankish influence is of crucial importance for understanding the states forming to the Carolingians' south-east. This is especially evident in the area adjoining the north-eastern Adriatic coast, where the dukes of Friuli played an important role, and where the correlation between the three phases of *aemulatio imperii* and historical fact is striking.

The active judicial and military role of the Frankish frontier governors – the dukes of Friuli, Eric, Cadolah and Baldric, and Gerold, prefect of Bavaria – was an immediate link between the Carolingians and the world beyond. Indeed, one of the earliest examples of the direct involvement of the Franks in affairs beyond their south-eastern frontier is that of Duke Eric, who was killed by Liburnian locals in Tarsatica (probably modern Trsat or Rijeka).[26] The case highlights the consolidation of Frankish authority in the frontier regions and the replacement of the active military role of ruler with that of local governor. Of course, when necessary the ruler could still come to the rescue, as in the case of the Avar campaign of 803. The Franks' view of the world beyond their authority becomes clearer after Eric's death. Paulinus, patriarch of Aquileia, states in his lament on Eric's death that Eric 'tamed the most savage barbarian *gentes*'.[27] Paulinus was, in fact, very closely connected with Alcuin, so his words give us a fine glimpse of the 'barbarology' prevalent among Carolingian scholars.[28] Setting aside the evident 'othering', the simple mention of Eric's death in the *Annales regni Francorum* shows his importance to the Carolingian ruling elite. The same is true of Cadolah, Baldric and Gerold, although some twenty years later their adversaries had names and territorial attributes – including Liudewit, duke of Lower Pannonia,[29] and the ruler of the Bulgars.

The main role of the dukes and margraves of Friuli would seem to have been overcoming differences with the *gentes* and attracting likely warlords, or key individuals, into the Frankish realm. The position of Vojnomir, a Slav warlord of unknown origin, during Eric's campaign against the Avars in 795 or 796 illustrates this.[30] We do not know whether Vojnomir was born in the Frankish realm and advanced up its military hierarchy, or whether he was attracted to it by the prospect of military advancement. Although there is little historical evidence about his life and military career, the *Annales*' reference to him by implication shows how Slavs beyond direct Carolingian authority could become part of its world, and that the easiest way of doing this was probably through military service. This, albeit implicitly and only to some extent, can be seen to correspond to the first phase of *aemulatio imperii*.

Another expression of *aemulatio imperii* can be detected in various archaeological finds from around this time, especially the large number of Carolingian-type swords found on the territory of what became the early medieval Croatian principality (today the region of Ravni Kotari). Most of these swords date from the end of the eighth or the early ninth century, exactly when the Carolingians were most active in this part of Europe.[31] The owners of these swords can be identified as members of the peripheral elite, marked out from others by their possessions. Accordingly, these swords may represent a sort of status marker, as well as having symbolic value whereby certain social groups were labelled as 'worthy' by the Franks.[32]

Elements of Chrysos' second phase of *aemulatio* can be seen in the second decade of the ninth century, in the battles between the warlords Liudewit, duke of Lower Pannonia, and Borna, duke of Dalmatia.[33] Liudewit appeared before Emperor Louis the Pious at Herstal in 818, unsuccessfully accusing Cadolah, duke of Friuli, of some unspecified mistreatment.[34] In the first half of the 819, Liudewit rebelled against Frankish overlordship and, following initial military success, even proposed peace terms to the emperor through envoys. It seems that a number of *gentes* joined the rebellion, including the Carniolans, Carantanians and Timociani, and Liudewit may also have gained the support of Fortunatus, patriarch of Grado. Unlike the rebels, Borna remained closely connected to the Franks and fought against Liudewit as their ally, but was defeated in battle on the Kupa river in 819. Liudewit invaded Borna's territory but was unable to defeat him decisively, and Borna remained a constant threat. In 820, three Frankish armies invaded Liudewit's lands, one from Italy and another two from Bavaria, an operation that was repeated in 821. Liudewit was finally defeated in 822 by an army sent from Italy. At first he fled to the Serbs and, a year later, to Borna's territory. By this time, Borna was dead and his lands were ruled by his nephew Ladislav, with the emperor's approval. Liudewit was killed there in 823 at the behest of Borna's uncle, Liudemisl.[35]

Unlike the Slav warlord Vojnomir, the attraction of the Franks for Borna reveals the deeper immersion of the Dalmatian *gentes* in Carolingian legal and social patterns. The outcome of the conflicts between Liudewit and Borna clearly shows the advantages for those siding with the Franks. The Guduscani were a hierarchical elite grouping who supported Borna and who probably imprinted their identity throughout his domain. But when they abandoned Borna in the midst of the Battle of the Kupa River, forcing him to restructure his authority and recruit a new elite, the decisive impetus for his restructuring seems to have come from his close connection with the Franks.[36] The military role of the Frankish frontier governors can also be seen in this period. As in the case of Eric, Cadolah's involvement in the conflict most probably resulted in his own death;[37] while his direct authority over the frontier regions is also evident in the borders drawn between the Carolingian and Byzantine worlds in 817.[38]

Regardless of whether they were in the first or second phase of *aemulatio*, most of the *gentes* attracted by the Carolingian world were to be found by the emperor's side at Herstal in 818, including envoys from Borna, Liudewit and

the Timociani. The latter are a clear example of first-phase *aemulatio*: according to Frankish sources, the Timociani had been within the Bulgar sphere of political influence, but had now 'transferred themselves to our borders'.[39] In 824, the Obodrites (*Praedenecenti*) also sought to forge a close connection with the Carolingian world: pressed by the Bulgars, they sent envoys to Louis the Pious, seeking his help and protection.[40] These two cases reveal growing Frankish influence in south-eastern Europe, reaching into territory considered to be under the authority of the Bulgar rulers. That relationships typical of first-phase *aemulatio* were widespread and well under way between the Carolingians and the world beyond can be seen from the events of 827, when the Bulgars launched a naval attack along the Drava river, replacing local Slav warlords with Bulgar governors.[41]

There are many examples of the second phase of *aemulatio imperii*.[42] The outcome of the diet held in Rižana in 804, known as the Plea (*placitum*) of Rižana, clearly shows the Slavs' deep affiliation with the Franks' social and economic regulations, systems of control and coercion, as well as with Frankish 'micro-Christendom'.[43] Although this example comes from a territory which had already been incorporated into the Carolingian world, it nonetheless illustrates the phase in which order is created according to the Frankish social and economic worldview. The situation was probably similar along the entire length of the frontier, especially in those regions which had previously been administered by Byzantium or which lay in the eastern Adriatic hinterland. In short, the Istrians' complaints about Duke John and their local bishops that were presented to Charlemagne's envoys in 804 were triggered by the administrative and military reorganization of the peninsula. The envoys, and ultimately the emperor, adjudicated in favour of the local elite – most probably in response to the wider political situation – but the Franks' intentions in Istria were nonetheless obvious. A similar pattern can be detected in the case of Liudewit's revolt. The seriousness of his complaints was such that they were even noted in the *Annales regni Francorum*.[44] The avowed cause was Cadolah's 'cruelty and arrogance', although we can only speculate upon the real events behind these words, and it is not impossible that the complaints were a narrative constructed in hindsight the better to explain subsequent events. Nonetheless, the fact remains that Cadolah had both the opportunity and the means to take action against Slavs who were not formally part of the empire. Since the accusations against Cadolah were rejected on the grounds that they were 'false', military conflict became inevitable. As a result, some territories and social groupings were drawn into closer connection with the Carolingian world.[45]

It is also worth noting that a further example of this second phase of *aemulatio imperii* can be seen in the increasingly widespread adoption of Carolingian architectural models during the ninth century, most notably the *Westwerk*.[46]

As these cases make clear, the main features of Carolingian power structures were successfully disseminated throughout territories beyond their frontiers. The rulers of these territories usually maintained a kind of satellite relationship to the empire, first becoming closely acquainted with the Carolingian world through prospects of military advancement, and then being incorporated into the Frankish

social and economic web, with the ruler himself at the centre. It is therefore understandable that Frankish influence did not diminish in the regions beyond the empire's south-eastern frontiers after the Treaty of Aachen. In fact, the clear divisions of the treaty and the outcome of Liudewit's revolt consolidated Frankish influence there, while most likely increasing Borna's dependence upon the Franks, thus creating the necessary preconditions for the third phase of *aemulatio imperii* as defined by Chrysos.

Aemulatio and the emergence of new identities

The 'barbarology' prevalent among the Carolingian scholars noted earlier offers us further insights into the workings of *aemulatio imperii*. Examining both 'barbarology' and the process of 'othering',[47] it seems likely that the Franks only became aware of emerging *gentes* when they showed certain aptitudes, in other words once they were acknowledged by the dominant identity as notable. These aptitudes, from the Frankish viewpoint, were primarily military capability or as a promising area for expanding their realm, which they conceptualized as 'the Christian people'.[48] It therefore seems reasonable to assume that only in relation to Frankish identity could other local identities be formed, and that in south-eastern Europe, this became possible only after the destruction of the Avar khaganate at the end of the eighth century. After adopting Frankish cultural and ideological norms – a process akin to that of *aemulatio imperii* – new identities were formed and were thus eventually able to enter the narrative.

Finally, we should relate this argument back to the Treaty of Aachen. After the treaty, there was little option but to maintain a mutual respect between the Byzantines in Dalmatia and the *gentes* in the hinterland.[49] The Treaty of Aachen envisaged a clear and visible boundary, further enhanced by the work of the border commission in 817, dividing the eastern Adriatic lands between the two empires.[50] However, it seems that in daily life there was no such strict division between the two spheres, with the differences dissolving in the ethnic melting pot and continuous exchange of goods, as the case of early medieval Zadar clearly demonstrates.[51] Furthermore, the position of the eastern Adriatic on the adjacent fringes of two empires was unique in early medieval Europe, and led to a specific form of historical development. In my opinion, this was the starting point for the gradual emulation of the Frankish model of rulership on the south-eastern frontier of the Carolingian empire. This model lasted throughout the ninth century and eventually resulted in the formation of the kingdom of Croatia, which corresponds to the third phase of *aemulatio imperii*.[52]

The three phases of *aemulatio imperii* can thus be detected in Frankish attitudes towards the *gentes* on their south-eastern frontier. The concept itself also offers us a better understanding of the Treaty of Aachen from the Frankish viewpoint and that of Charlemagne himself, in his dealings with the Byzantines. For the emerging *gentes, aemulatio* would seem to be an important model in understanding the patterns of their social relationships with the Franks and their transformation into *regna*.

Indeed, further studies should reveal whether this concept is applicable to other regions of the Carolingian world, primarily in border regions where new *gentes* emerged and, if signs of the various phases of *aemulatio* can be detected there, whether or not the concept itself is applicable. A closer look at *aemulatio imperii* in the context of the Franks' military affairs and the process of Christianization – both essential parts of their cosmology at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries – would also be invaluable; as would consideration of the Franks' pervasive political, social and cultural influence on their neighbours. Such further research would enable us to determine whether the concept of *aemulatio imperii* is plausible for other regions at this time, such as the area to the east of the Elbe river, the Jutland peninsula, the non-Muslim regions of north Iberia and Brittany.[53] And only with the results of such comparative research could the decisive importance that the Byzantine presence on the eastern Adriatic held for emerging *gentes* be shown clearly.

At any rate, in the wider context of historiographical approaches to the early Middle Ages, the concept of *aemulatio imperii* is one of the few conceptual frameworks that can be employed for a better understanding of ethnic and state formation on the south-eastern frontiers of the Carolingian world. We have already noted the process of 'othering' and its close connection with *aemulatio imperii*. Yet it seems that another important conceptual framework has similarly close connections with this concept: that of boundaries and frontiers.[54] If frontier *gentes* are viewed through the dynamic interrelationship between centre and periphery, the Franks' attempts to mould the periphery according to their own worldview, through constant political interference, become clear. A thorough parallel examination of both frameworks – *aemulatio imperii* and centre-periphery – should help us understand the early medieval history of the wider eastern Adriatic region.[55] This is all the more important because, from the start of the ninth century, the Franks started to adopt a new 'peacetime mentality', and, as most historians agree, the Carolingian frontiers became primarily areas of exchange and transculturation.[56]

Notes

1 Chrysos 2003.
2 For the significance of the concept of *imitatio imperii* in Byzantino-Scandinavian relations, see Vierck 1981. For a recent application, see Stepanov 2012; and for its application to the Carolingian age, see Gabriel 1986.
3 Chrysos 2003, 13.
4 Chrysos 2003, 13–14.
5 Chrysos 2003, 14–16.
6 Chrysos 2003, 16–17.
7 Gabriel 1986.
8 To paraphrase and simplify Claude Lévi-Strauss, the 'other' is bound to be incorporated or expelled (by the 'self'): Lévi-Strauss 1961, 384–87. On the 'other' and otherness, see also Levinas 1979. On ethnicity and identity, see the somewhat out-of-date but still very useful surveys in Barth 1969; Barth 1989.
9 The critical literature on 'othering', ethnicity and identity is vast; see, for example, Geary 1983; Reynolds 1998; Little and Rosenwein 1998; Pohl and Reimitz 1998; Pohl 1999; Gillett 2002; Pohl and Diesenberger 2002. On south-eastern Europe, see most

notably Curta 2001; Curta and Kovalev 2008; Stepanov 2010. On early medieval Croatia, see Budak 1995; Budak 2008; *HiK*; *BSBC*. For an in-depth insight into the process of 'othering' during the Middle Ages, see Mastnak 2002.

10 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, 90.

11 Horvat and Bavdek 2009, 13–22, 129–52.

12 'Othering' is the process of incorporating the 'other' into an overall self-identity.

13 Given the limited scope of this chapter, inevitably some important aspects of early medieval Croatian history and its extensive critical literature cannot be covered here.

14 For some of the critical literature about the coronation, see Folz 1974; Noble 1984, 256–308; Mayr-Harting 1996; Godman *et al.* 2002; Brown 2008; Costambeys *et al.* 2011, 160–70. See also Garipzanov 2008a, *passim*. See also the chapter by Ančić in this volume.

15 For a detailed examination of Frankish-Byzantine relations, see Classen 1985; McCormick 1994; McCormick 2008.

16 Costambeys *et al.* 2011, 167–69.

17 On these spheres of influence, see Budak 1997; Ančić 1997; Ančić 1998a; Ančić 2000.

18 See the chapter by Basić in this volume.

19 On the Avar campaigns, see *ASM*, 312–23. See also Szőke 2005; Polek 2007, 237–45.

20 On Frankish-Byzantine relations, the armed conflict and its connection with the Bulgars and the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, see *ARF* s.a. 804–810, 118–33; *CTC*, 653, 678; Charlemagne, *Letter to Nikephoros I*; al-Tabari, *History*, 239; JD[1], 101–04; Classen 1985, 91–93; *BaB*, 149–245; Štih 2010, 224–25. On communications between the two empires after the treaty, see Vedriš 2005 and his chapter in this volume.

21 *ARF* s.a. 811, 134–35. For further arguments, see *BaB*, 193–94. See also the chapter by Nikolov in this volume.

22 This is hinted at in the *ARF* s.a. 811, 133; see also Costambeys *et al.* 2011, 166–69; Ohnsorge 1975.

23 *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

24 On Byzantine administration of the Dalmatian coastal towns, see Ferluga 1978, 165–89. See also Goldstein 1996.

25 This was most clearly seen in late 805 or early 806, when Bishop Donatus, Duke Paul of Zadar and the doges of Venice, Obelerius and Beatus, accepted the authority of the Frankish ruler: *ARF* s.a. 806, 120–21. For a detailed insight into the state of affairs in Venice, see Classen 1985, 91–93.

26 *ARF* s.a. 799, 108; *VKM*, 16. The issues of who actually killed Eric and the exact location of Tarsatica remain open. The literature on this matter is vast, but I would like to single out the following studies: Ross 1945; *FiF*, 152–58; Budak 1994, 15; Margetić 1994. For a range of opinions, see Turković and Basić 2011, 73–77; Labus 2000; Levak 2007, 19–36; *BSBC*, 189. See also the chapters by Ančić, Štih and Gračanin in this volume.

27 'barbaras gentes domuit sevissimas': Paulinus, 'On Duke Eric', 131.

28 On the importance of Paulinus' work, see Stone 2012, *passim*.

29 'Liudewiti, ducis Pannoniae inferioris': *ARF* s.a. 818, 149.

30 'Wonomyro Sclavo': *ARF* s.a.796, 98.

31 The critical literature on this subject is enormous. However, for the purpose of this chapter, see the overviews in Milošević 2000; Bilogrivić 2009. Also on various archaeological finds see Sokol 2006; Petrinec 2009.

32 Moravia is a good example of the potential benefits that could accrue from a relationship between the Franks and the elites on their periphery: Curta 2006, 130–32. For the situation inland from the Dalmatian towns, see Sokol 2006, 167–70; *BSBC,* 207.

33 'Dalmatia' was the most habitable area that lay between the western Dinaric Alps and the eastern Adriatic coast, and comprised a large part of the region of Ravni Kotari. Discussion about Borna's title is still ongoing; for an overview of the critical literature, see *BSBC*, 184–85; Gračanin 2012; Sokol 2012.

34 Historians traditionally hold that Liudewit's title refers to the territory between the Drava and Sava rivers, with Sisak on the Sava as his capital; see for example Bowlus 1995, 60–70. Although his territory probably included the region between the middle reaches of the Drava and Sava rivers, it is unlikely that his seat was at Sisak.

35 *ARF* s.a. 819–823, 150–61; *GHI* chs 31–32, ed. Pertz, 623–25; ed. and trans. Tremp, 388–401.

36 *ARF* s.a. 819–820, 151–53.

37 *ARF* s.a. 819, 151.

38 *ARF* s.a. 817, 145; *GHI* ch. 27, ed. Pertz, 621; ed. and trans. Tremp, 370–71.

39 'ad nostros fines se contulerant': *ARF* s.a. 818, 149; *GHI* ch. 31, ed. Pertz, 623–24; ed. and trans. Tremp, 388–89.

40 *ARF* s.a. 824, 165–66. For further discussion on the Obodrites, see *BaB*, 295.

41 *ARF* s.a. 827, 173. For further confrontations between Bulgars and Franks, see *BaB*, 295–97.

42 Probably the best illustration is a large baptismal font inscribed with the name of *dux* Višeslav. Višeslav would seem to have been the ruler of some political formation inland from the Dalmatian towns in the early ninth century. He is a very shadowy figure, and even the date of his rule is uncertain, having been placed either *c*. 800 or in the second half of the ninth century. However, the font's size would indicate that it was used for adult baptisms, and it is thus evidence of acceptance of the Carolingian social concepts being disseminated by their missionaries. For an overview of the controversies over Višeslav and the font, see Jakšić 2002; Matijević Sokol 2007. It should be noted that a thorough art historical analysis of the font is still lacking.

43 On the Plea of Rižana, see Krahwinkler 2004; the papers in *AH* 13 (2005) (*Istra med vzhodom in zahodom: Ob 1200-letnici Rižanskega zbora / Istria between the East and the West: At the 1200th Anniversary of the Placitum of Riziano*); Levak 2007; Štih 2010, 212–29. On 'micro-Christendoms', see Brown 2003, 1–34, 355–79.

44 *ARF* s.a. 818, 149.

45 *GHI* ch. 31, ed. Pertz, 623–24; ed. and trans. Tremp, 388–89.

46 Jurković 2001; *BSBC*, 201–08. See also the chapters by Skoblar and Basić in this volume.

47 For different aspects of 'othering' in the Frankish world, see Wood 2013. See also Heather 1997.

48 Further clarification on the Frankish realm conceptualized as 'the Christian people' in de Jong 2005.

49 For further possibilities, see Curta 2010.

50 The critical literature on the subject of boundaries and frontiers is enormous. However, for the purpose of this chapter, see Smith 1995; the papers in *TFLAC* and Curta 2005; Garipzanov 2008b; Curta 2011. On the looseness of Byzantine authority in the frontier region of Zadar, see Ančić 1998b; Vedriš 2011. On the border commission's work in 817, see *ARF* s.a. 817, 145; *GHI* ch. 27, ed. Pertz, 621; ed. and trans. Tremp, 370–71.

51 When local elites at Zadar first appear in the sources, it is evident that some are of Croat origin. How these elites saw themselves is, however, another matter. See Jakić-Cestarić 1972; Jakić-Cestarić 1977; Nikolić 2003.

52 For similar conclusions, albeit with regard to the Byzantines' relations with steppe people, see Vachkova 2008.

53 For the results of similar research, although somewhat earlier than the period examined here, see the papers in Goetz *et al* 2003.

54 See above, n. 50.

55 For studies using the conceptual framework of boundaries and frontiers, see Ančić 1997; Ančić 1998a; Ančić 2000.

56 Costambeys *et al*. 2011, 172.

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4 Imperial politics and its regional consequences

Istria between Byzantium and the Franks 788–812

Peter Štih

Introduction: Sources for the Frankish take-over

Only two sources provide us with direct information about the first fifteen years or so of Frankish rule in Istria from around 788 until 804. The first of these is a letter Charlemagne sent to his wife Fastrada in September 791. Among the topics featured in the letter is an incursion of the Frankish army across the eastern border of Italy in August of the same year, resulting in the destruction of an Avar border post. Presumably, this border post was somewhere in what is now western Slovenia and stood on the main communication route, the old Roman road between Aquileia and Emona, connecting the Po valley with the Pannonian region. Most probably intended to divert the Avars' attention from the Bavarian border and the Danubian basin, where the Franks under Charlemagne's personal command had concentrated the bulk of their forces to attack the khaganate, the *Blitzkrieg*-style attack on the border post involved the duke of Istria and his military contingent. The duke's name is not recorded.[1]

The second source attesting the Frankish presence in Istria is the famous Plea (*placitum*) of Rižana, from an assembly that was probably held in 804 in the Capodistrian hinterland.[2] This document, which has intrigued European historians for more than a century, shows clearly that the new Frankish regime brought about great changes to the Istrians' way of life within a relatively short period.[3] The Franks' radical interference with their old rights and customs aggravated the Istrians' economic and political situation to such an extent that conflict erupted between the provincial representative of the new rulers – Duke John and the local church, represented by the Istrian bishops – on the one hand, and the local population – in particular those members of the elite who exercised economic and political power – on the other. Conflict escalated to the point that only direct intervention from no less a figure than Emperor Charlemagne himself could offer a solution.[4] The protocol of the Diet of Rižana, convened by three *missi* on behalf of the emperor and his son Pippin, king of Italy, thus not only bears witness to the changes in Istria and the hardships of its inhabitants, but also demonstrates Charlemagne's willingness to hear their complaints and soothe the conflict. The causes of both the escalation of the conflict and its eventual settlement can only be understood if one sets events in Istria in a wider context. One needs to view

the episode within a broader conspectus of the developments that left their mark on the vast area between the northern Adriatic and the Middle Danube at the turn of the ninth century.

Underlying all this is the Frankish expansionism which Charlemagne unleashed. In the early summer of 774 he occupied Pavia and had himself crowned king of the Lombards. He only achieved final control over what had been the Lombard duchy of Friuli in 776, when his army quashed the rebellion of the local duke Hrodgaud.[5] For the first time, the Franks were direct neighbours of the Avars, who controlled the valley of the river Sava in Slovenia up to the Karst passes in the west. When Charlemagne deposed the last duke of Bavaria, Tassilo III, twelve years later and proceeded to subjugate Bavaria[6] – to which Carantania was subjected – the two great powers dominating central Europe confronted one another all the way from the Austrian Danube basin in the north to the Adriatic in the south: the Frankish realm and the Avar khaganate.

Whether Charlemagne occupied Byzantine Istria at the same time as taking over Bavaria, in 788, is not clear, but it is highly likely.[7] At any rate, the occupation had occurred by the late summer of 791, when a contingent from Istria participated in the aforementioned Frankish attack on an Avar border post.[8] Indeed, Frankish influence in Istria was already palpable in the period before the quashing of Duke Hrodgaud of Friuli's revolt in 776, when Frankish rule extended to the borders of Byzantine Istria, and not just those of the Avar khaganate. It was then that, in response to a request from Charlemagne, Bishop Maurice of Novigrad (Cittanova)[9] was collecting Peter's Pence in Istria for the Roman curia.[10] This simple fact makes one suspect that Charlemagne had his eye on Istria too, although he had promised the province to the Roman papacy and the state of St Peter before being crowned king of the Lombards; that, at least, is what the papal curia claimed.[11] As a result, local Istrian Greeks – assisted by Roman(ized) Istrians – blinded the unfortunate bishop, accusing him of wanting to hand Istria over to Charlemagne. Pope Hadrian I, who recounted these events to the Frankish king, sent the blinded bishop to Marcarius, the new duke of Friuli, in the hope that he would be able to return to his Istrian bishopric by command of Charlemagne.[12]

The Avar dimension: Charlemagne's campaigns, 791–803

Regardless of when exactly Charlemagne expanded his dominion to Istria, our earliest evidence of the peninsula being ruled by the Franks indicates that, right from the start, Istria's inhabitants were incorporated into the military machine that would destroy the Avar khaganate over the following years. The lightning occupation of the border post in late August 791 was merely the overture to a war that would last for many years. As noted, it probably served to distract the Avars' attention from the main expedition against them led by Charlemagne himself. His great army, consisting of detachments on either side of the Danube and also a river fleet, gathered in Lorch and crossed the border on the river Enns in late September 791. The campaign lasted a month and a half and reached the Rába river in

Pannonia without major clashes, but then it had to return home, because winter was approaching and disease had killed most of the army's horses.[13]

Although this expedition ranged deep into hostile territory with impunity, it failed to achieve its basic objective, the destruction of the khaganate. Thus warfare against the Avars had to remain high on Charlemagne's agenda. This is suggested by the fact that Charlemagne remained in Regensburg until the end of 793, and also by his extensive preparations over the following period. These included constructing a special mobile pontoon bridge, mobilizing troops in Aquitaine, and starting work on a canal connecting the Rhine, via the Main, to the Danube in order to supply the army. Clearly, Charlemagne was determined to bring about a final solution to the Avar problem as soon as possible. However, a Saxon uprising, battles against the Umayyads of Cordoba and the conspiracy headed by Pippin the Hunchback, his oldest yet illegitimate son, required his engagement elsewhere. As a result of all of this, the deployment of his troops for a decisive campaign against the Avars was postponed year after year.[14]

The respite this brought for the Avars proved of little use for a possible (re)organization of their defences. In fact, the pressure from the Franks triggered internal conflicts culminating in a civil war which cost the lives of both the leading Avar princes, the khagan and the jugur. The tudun, another member of the Avar ruling elite, agreed to subject his land and people to Charlemagne and to adopt the Christian faith in 795.[15] That same year the Franks exploited the enemy's weakness to mount a rather adventurous campaign; its principal initiator was, in all probability, Eric, the duke of Friuli. Not a great army but a small strike force would deliver the fatal blow. For this purpose Eric organized a fast-moving unit that was to set off from Friuli and penetrate right to the heart of the khaganate, between the Danube and the Tisza. He entrusted command over these elite Frankish troops to the enigmatic Slav warlord Vojnomir. They had already reached the main Avar fortified encampment, the 'Ring' (*hring*), by the autumn of 795 and plundered part of the legendary Avar treasure.[16] Nearly three centuries after the offensive down the Sava by the Ostrogothic king Theoderic the Great and his seizure of Pannonia Secunda (including its capital, Sirmium) from the Gepids,[17] this was the first military campaign launched from Italian soil into Pannonia and the Middle Danube basin. The Avars, whose principal military strengths had always been speed and surprise, were defeated at their own game.

The larger-scale military campaign of the next year led by Charlemagne's son Pippin, and joined by the patriarch of Aquileia, Paulinus – as well as by contingents from Bavaria and Alemannia, accompanied by Bishop Arno of Salzburg – merely confirmed a fait accompli: the new Avar khagan and his dignitaries submitted to the Franks on the Danube, where the army had set up camp. It was here that a special synod adopted new guidelines for the Christianization of the newly conquered territory and its inhabitants, assigning them to either Aquileia or Salzburg, whose missionary territories were divided by the Drava river.[18] Pippin's army once more occupied the *hring* and seized what was left of the Avar treasure.[19]

However, conditions in this vast newly conquered territory, extending from the region of Bohemia to the Dalmatian hinterland and from the borders of Italy to the Danube in Pannonia, were far from under control, and Avar power was not yet entirely broken. As a result, the Friulian duke Eric and his army, consisting of Lombard (Italian-based) and Frankish troops, had to fight the Avars again in 797. They defeated them, but in the summer of 799 there was a major Avar uprising. Both the Frankish commanders in charge of the defence of the eastern borders lost their lives. During the campaign Duke Eric, one of Charlemagne's foremost paladins, was killed in an ambush by the inhabitants of the town of Tarsatica in the immediate hinterland of Istria. The Bavarian prefect and commander of the northern section of the Avar border, Gerold I, was also killed somewhere in Pannonia.[20] Continuing unrest in Pannonia claimed prominent new victims in 802. This time it was the margraves Goteram and Cadolah who were slain, together with many members of their escort. The defeat of 802 at the Avars' hands prompted the Frankish army to march into Pannonia again the following year. Charlemagne considered the matter of such import that he travelled from his estate at Salz on the Saale river to Bavaria 'on account of Pannonian affairs', and he awaited the return of his army in Regensburg.[21] The army came back with the Avar tudun and numerous Avars and Slavs who submitted to the emperor. This put an end to their uprisings. From this time on, they were constantly on the defensive and were exposed to ever-increasing pressures from the Slavs, to the point that the Frankish army had to intervene in Pannonia in 811 to protect them from the Slavs.[22]

Thus for more than a decade, alarms, excursions and outright war set the tone for developments in the area between Italy and the Danube. As noted, it was from Friuli that the campaigns sealing the Avar khaganate's fate set off in 795 and 796, and the region became a base for very large-scale military operations. Istria's contingent led by the provincial duke had participated in the first campaign against the Avars in the late summer of 791, and there can be no doubt that the peninsula bore the full weight of the war, not just the consequences but the preparations, too, and the war effort demanded manpower as well as material resources. Living with – and for – incessant warfare exhausted the people and the land, with repercussions for the economy and for the chain of command. Satisfying the requirements of Charlemagne and his deputies involved many changes to everyday life. Together with Friuli and Bavaria, Istria was, in effect, in the front line of Frankish expansionism, and so these changes were unavoidable. We may assume that these highly exposed areas became permanently mobilized for war. This raises a basic question: how far were the complaints made by the Istrians at the Diet of Rižana in 804 due to this state of emergency, or to the changes it entailed?

The Diet of Rižana: Duke John's reorganization and the war effort against the Avars

One complaint which clearly arose from the general military situation concerned Duke John's requirement that the Istrians should go on campaign together with their bondsmen (*servi*).[23] The Avars figured prominently among the enemies

(*hostes*) mentioned in this connection. The Istrians – or rather their political and economic elite – were particularly upset by Duke John's recruitment of soldiers regardless of their legal or social status. As a backdrop to this escalation we can see John's policy of introducing general conscription, such as was practised else-where in the Frankish empire.[24] The confiscation of horses, which John either gave to his soldiers (*sui homines*) or sent back with them (*in Franciam*), also had military connotations.[25] Providing horses for the Frankish cavalry must have been particularly urgent when disease was ravaging their own stock. And this is precisely what happened to Charlemagne's army in 791, when it lost nine out of ten of its horses to pestilence (*equorum lues*).[26] The Istrians' complaints that their horses were sent to Francia may have been connected with the aftermath of this campaign.

These two complaints – the compulsory military service imposed on the Istri-ans and their bondsmen, and the confiscation of their horses – are not isolated points in the Plea of Rižana. They form part of a special body of complaints that the Istrians voiced against Duke John in front of the emperor's envoys, and are among those included in a special, second chapter of the charter. In this chapter, the Istrians also denounce the duke's abolition of the tribunate (*tribunatus*) and appointment of centarchs (*centarchi*). They complain that he had banned them from maintaining free men (*liberi homines*); appropriated their freed slaves (*lib-erti*); settled foreigners in their homes (*advenae homines*) over whom they had no authority at all; and that he had taken their 'exempted subjects' (*scusati*, i.e. *excusati*) away from them.[27]

This set of complaints marks a reaction to the new military organization Duke John had imposed on the peninsula, acting on behalf of the emperor.[28] The tribu-nate he abolished was not just the office of the tribune: it included lower offices such as *domestici*, *vicarii* and *locoservatores*.[29] In the Istrian towns, those who were elected to these offices belonged to the local aristocracy of wealthy land-lords. In accordance with the early middle Byzantine system of administration, this amounted to militarized urban self-government. In other words, civilian administrative matters were in military hands, and the town's tribunes, *domestici*, *vicarii* and *locoservatores* were indeed officers.[30] Although the judicial role of the tribune is not entirely clear, he was responsible for tax collection within a town's precincts as well as being the highest military commander of the troops maintained by the town.[31] It is therefore quite understandable how and why the abolition of the tribunate upset the Istrian elite so much. It simultaneously eliminated their urban self-government and threatened the very basis of their power. Furthermore, these measures thwarted – and this was most probably their main aim – all inde-pendent or autonomous operations of a military nature by the town authorities. The new commanders introduced by Duke John were centarchs:[32] lower ranking than tribunes, most importantly they were not elected to office. It is quite feasible that Duke John appointed his sons and son-in-law to these top posts.[33]

When Duke John prohibited the Istrian towns from maintaining free men, deprived the Istrians of their freed slaves, settled foreigners in their homes and for-bade the (former) holders of town offices (*omnis tribunus*) to maintain 'exempted

subjects', these measures all had one and the same aim: to centralize the province's military organization and make it more efficient.[34] The free men (*liberi homines*) were probably no more than warriors, who had voluntarily submitted to an individual lord through an act of commendation and, as such, were beyond reach of the direct military authority of the provincial duke.[35] In the same way as he started to recruit soldiers without differentiating between lords and their bondsmen, Duke John expanded general conscription to include both the freed slaves (*liberti*) he had taken from the prosperous Istrians and the 'exempted subjects' (*scusati*) of the tribunes, whose authority had been curtailed. Every tribune was entitled to five or more *scusati*, who were excused military service on account of the tasks they performed for the tribunes.[36]

Who were the 'foreigners' (*advenae homines*) whom the Istrians grumbled that John had settled on them and over whom they had no authority? They may have been Slavs or others now assigned for military service, having submitted to the duke through commendation, and thus freeing themselves from any authority the Istrians had over them.[37] It is unlikely the *advenae homines* were settled on the Istrians' private estates. It is more likely they were settled on communal land, owned in common by individual towns or *castella*. In his defence, Duke John claimed that he believed this land belonged to the fisc and thus to be state property. But such settlement of Slavs may have been another means, in addition to colonization and economic policy, of pursuing his military aims.[38]

Another aspect of the military reorganization was the imposition of taxes and services. The Istrians faced not only new and higher demands; the extension of these obligations to groups that had formerly been exempt overstepped class and other social barriers within individual towns and *castella*. The Istrians pointed out that they were performing all these service obligations (*angaria*) and paying extraordinary taxes (*superposita*, *collecta*) under coercion and in breach of ancient custom. This had not only brought shame, but had also driven them into poverty.[39] Of the new taxes, whether in money or in kind, *fodrum* was most obviously a military one:[40] often paid as horse feed, this was the equivalent of the *annona militaris* levied in Late Antiquity.[41] Service obligations of a military nature included dog breeding; navigation of the Adriatic and riverways, presumably connected with the army's logistical requirements;[42] and horse carting, which the Istrians had to perform over distances of thirty or more miles, probably for the same purpose.[43]

The measures which so irked the Istrians and which sparked off their bitter conflict with the emperor's top representative in the region were not, then, merely a general consequence of the transition from Byzantine to Frankish rule, which supposedly involved tighter supervision secured by 'feudal' oaths and other changes in Istrian society.[44] Nor do they simply register Duke John's high-handedness, corruption, nepotism or general perfidy, as is usually claimed. These measures were, for the most part, the product of a particular situation in the Upper Adriatic in the last decade of the eighth century, when ever more material and human resources were needed for the Frankish war effort. And it was Duke John's responsibility to supply them. To this end he had to enforce a range of measures. His modus operandi was undeniably brutal, but the aim was to create a more efficient military

organization than was possible under the status quo: arrangements relying on urban self-government in the hands of the local aristocracy were not, in John's view, up to the job. By abolishing the tribunate, he tightened the central military command; by imposing new and higher taxes and obligations, he sought to cover mounting costs and requirements; and by extending conscription and settling new people in the region, he strove to obtain new recruits.

A side effect of Duke John's measures was that Istria was completely thrown off balance socially, economically and politically. Affecting the old elite as well as other social strata, this caused deep resentment and unrest, and all the more so in view of the tensions between the Byzantines and Franks and the positioning of the two powers on the northern Adriatic.

Venice, the Byzantine dimension and the question of Grado

The second axis of Frankish policy which directly affected Istria was relations with Byzantium. Following the fall of the exarchate of Ravenna in 751, Byzantium continued to lose ground in the Upper Adriatic, while the Franks made gains in almost equal proportion.[45] Having occupied Byzantine Istria by 791 at the latest, and gained control over the predominantly Slav hinterland of Dalmatia around the same time, the Franks put pressure on the Byzantine coastal towns.[46] Venice, the only area in the Upper Adriatic still under Byzantine rule, was a particularly sensitive issue.[47] The centre of the coastal and lagoon world between Grado and Chioggia (*Venetia maritima*) was still Malamocco; the move to Rivoalto was yet to come. The region had increasingly gained its autonomy from Constantinople but now faced pressure on all sides from its Frankish-dominated hinterland. In granting immunity and confirming the possessions of Patriarch John of Grado, Charlemagne was probably already beginning to exercise authority and interfere in Venetian affairs before 800.[48]

Frankish influence continued to increase in the lagoons around 800, as one part of the Venetian elite sought backing from the Franks in the town's internal power struggle.[49] Patriarch John belonged to this circle: he had been in contact with Charlemagne as early as 775, at least indirectly.[50] When, in 798, Patriarch John refused to ordain the doge's candidate, the Greek Christopher, as the new bishop of Olivolo, open conflict erupted. This came to a temporary halt in 802 when the young doge Maurice II, son of the ruling doge John, sailed to Grado with a fleet and killed Patriarch John.[51] The patriarch's successor was Fortunatus,[52] to whom Pope Leo III granted the *pallium* in March 803.[53] Leo's appointment of a close relative of the murdered patriarch to head the church of Grado sent out a clear political message of defiance to the ruling doges, John and Maurice. In the spring of the same year, Fortunatus left for Frankish territory in nearby Treviso together with a group of pro-Frankish tribunes and other Venetian notables (*Veneticorum maiorum*); from there he continued his journey to Salz on the Saale (present-day Bad Neustadt), where he met Charlemagne in the summer of 803.[54]

The two charters Charlemagne granted to the church of Grado on this occasion are clear evidence of the support Patriarch Fortunatus enjoyed from the

emperor, to whom he had given rich and beautiful presents upon his arrival.[55] Charlemagne's first charter confirmed the possessions of the church of Grado and granted it immunity.[56] His second exempted four of the patriarch's ships from paying tolls.[57] For Fortunatus, however, the most important thing was that he was addressed in the second charter by the title of 'patriarch of Venice and Istria' (*Venetiarum et Istriensium patriarcha*). Thus Charlemagne effectively confirmed him as the metropolitan of Istria.[58]

The question of the ecclesiastical affiliation of Istria – to the prelate based in Byzantine-ruled Grado or to his rival in Lombard Aquileia or Cividale – receives attention elsewhere in this book.[59] Here, we shall merely note that the Lombards' occupation of the peninsula in the third quarter of the eighth century complicated things further. Enjoying the patronage of the Lombard authorities, the Istrian church slipped out of the patriarch of Grado's jurisdiction around 770. For some time the church enjoyed virtual autocephalous status, with its bishops simply ordaining one another.[60] The bitter conflict between the patriarch and his Istrian suffragans was grist to the Aquileian mill, and Aquileia's patriarch had begun strengthening his position in Istria even before the province came under Frankish rule. A decree of the clergy and citizens of Pula requested Patriarch Sigualdus of Aquileia (who died in 787) to ordain the bishop they had elected.[61] This is first-class evidence of the increasing influence of Aquileia over the peninsula. When Istria fell under Frankish dominion, the patriarch of Grado found himself living once more under a different regime from that of his Istrian suffragans. Aquileia, located in Frankish territory, was now better placed than ever to attain the goal so long sought after. Patriarch Fortunatus, for his part, had all the more reason to try and gain maximal legitimacy for his bid for metropolitan status in Istria. Around 770, in a letter to the Istrian bishops, the pope had made it quite clear that they had been of old 'sub iuris districtione ac consecratione' of the patriarch of Grado.[62] Confirmation came from Charlemagne in 803,[63] and the Istrians themselves reiterate this in the Plea of Rižana.[64]

The text of the Plea shows that there were no points at issue between the Istrians and Patriarch Fortunatus. They not only supported his efforts to strengthen Istria's metropolitan status, but also exempted his church from all the taxes it should have paid in Istria in accordance with common law.[65] Given the Istrians' complaints about Duke John's new tax burdens taking them to the brink of ruin, such generosity towards the patriarch would be utterly beyond comprehension, were it not for the assistance Fortunatus had promised and the support he had already shown them.[66] All of which implies that the Istrians had won Fortunatus over on the issue that mattered most to them – his assurance that he would mediate with the emperor on their behalf.[67] We can therefore assume that this was one of the reasons for Fortunatus' visit to Charlemagne in Salz in 803, when Istrian affairs became a matter of urgency. Envoys of the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros I (802–811) had arrived in Salz shortly before the patriarch; and, after receiving a kind of draft peace treaty, 'pactum faciendae pacis', they returned to Constantinople by way of Rome.[68] Although the contents of the letter the Byzantine envoys carried home with them is not known, the very fact that there had been discussions

about a peace treaty suggests that negotiations included the question of delimiting the Byzantine and the Frankish spheres in the northern Adriatic.

This delicate balance between the Franks and the Byzantines meant that affairs in Istria could easily have taken a violent turn; this would have been to the detriment of the Frankish position in the northern Adriatic and could have had considerable political ramifications. As the Plea of Rižana shows, the general mood in Istria was to see the period of Byzantine rule as the 'good old days'. The Franks were understandably worried that this might open the way to Byzantine influence or even to the revival of their domination over the peninsula. After all, the fates of Maurice, bishop of Novigrad, and Eric, duke of Friuli, did not bode well. Maurice was blinded in the second half of the 770s by *nefandissimi Graeci*, who feared that Istria would fall to the Franks; this was triggered by his collection of Peter's Pence in Istria at Charlemagne's behest.[69] And Eric was killed in 799 in an ambush near Tarsatica in Liburnia. This belonged to the sphere, if not dominions, of Byzantium, and one cannot rule out the possibility that his death was instigated by the government in Constantinople.[70]

The Diet of Rižana and Charlemagne's *Realpolitik*

Thus tensions in Istria in the early ninth century abruptly began to pose a potential threat to Frankish policies in the northern Adriatic, and finding a way of resolving the problem became one of Charlemagne's top priorities. It is virtually certain that he took the decision to call the Diet of Rižana during Patriarch Fortunatus' visit to Salz, in August 803.[71] The Diet's abolition of most of the measures introduced by Duke John and the local bishops, followed by the re-establishment of the old autonomy – and thus the political power – of the town elites, calmed down the situation in Istria. The Diet was an important step towards securing Frankish hegemony in the northern Adriatic.

In 804, the same year as the Diet, a pro-Frankish party that had fled into exile to Treviso in 803 seized power in Venice, and the doges John and Maurice took to flight. The pro-Frankish party installed in their place Obelerius from Malamocco, who appointed his brother Beatus as co-ruler.[72] The two new doges travelled to Charlemagne in Diedenhofen immediately after Christmas 805, accompanied by two envoys from Dalmatia: Paul, duke of the town of Zadar, and the local bishop, Donatus. Given that on this occasion the emperor issued his *Ordinatio de ducibus et populis tam Venetiae quam Dalmatiae*,[73] their visit can only have signified the formal subjugation of Byzantine Venice and Dalmatia to Charlemagne.[74] Surprisingly, the *Divisio regnorum* issued only a month later in Diedenhofen assigned the greatly expanded kingdom of Italy to Pippin upon his father's death, but without mentioning the provinces of Venice and Dalmatia.[75] However, the *Divisio* does not mention Istria either. Seeing that Istria had formerly belonged to Byzantium – which did not recognize the Frankish occupation of what were still, *de iure*, Byzantine provinces on the Adriatic – the reason for these provinces' absence from the *Divisio* is understandable in the context of the protracted and complex peace negotiations between the two empires.

Whatever the reason for the absence of Dalmatia, Istria and Venice from the *Divisio regnorum*, the Franks' subjugation of coastal Dalmatia and Venice pushed Byzantium to the point that diplomacy had to make way for armed intervention. A fleet sailed into the Adriatic late in 806, where it occupied Dalmatia and block-aded Venice. The king of Frankish Italy, Charlemagne's son Pippin, was forced to negotiate a truce with the commander of the Byzantine fleet, the *patrikios* Nike-tas, effectively restoring Byzantine control over Venice. After the truce expired in late 808, hostilities broke out again, and in 809 Pippin managed to occupy large parts of the lagoons with his army; the Byzantine emperor sent envoys to Pippin to negotiate peace in Italy the following year. Shortly before their arrival, however, Pippin died (on 8 July 810), and the envoys continued their journey to Charlemagne. The emperor now sought a general peace, including recognition of his imperial title. In exchange, he was willing to renounce Venice and the Dalma-tian coastal towns, territories which he was anyway incapable of holding down, thanks to Byzantium's naval supremacy.[76] In 811, a Frankish mission travelled to Constantinople to continue the negotiations;[77] it included Count Aio, a Lombard from Friuli,[78] who had already attended the Diet of Rižana as an imperial and royal *missus*. A Byzantine mission acclaimed Charlemagne emperor in Aachen in 812, and peace between the two empires was concluded *de facto*, although it took another three years before the treaty was ratified in 815.[79]

The Treaty of Aachen: Stabilization, with seeds of local discord

The Treaty of Aachen meant that Istria would remain under Frankish authority and that the Byzantines recognized this fact. The new situation promised long-term stability. Louis the Pious issued a charter, most probably early in his reign, addressed to Patriarch Fortunatus, the bishops, abbots, tribunes and other *fideles* of the Istrian province, confirming their honourable offices and the 'old law' (*lex antiqua*).[80] In direct reference to this 'old law', the charter explicitly states that all their offices, including that of the (provincial) governor and even that of the patri-arch, were elected ones.[81] The charter also directly refers to the Diet of Rižana (*iudicatum*) as a source for the law of obligations, and guarantees once more that the Istrians' rights would remain as they had been under Byzantine rule. But the form of the law had changed. In the Byzantine period, it had been largely orally transmitted common law; the investigation at the Diet of Rižana somehow codi-fied it; and it finally acquired the form and effect of a ruler's charter under Louis the Pious.[82]

Although the Treaty of Aachen brought stability to the northern Adriatic, it con-tained the seeds of a dispute, with Istria at its centre, which would take more than a quarter of a millennium to resolve. The boundaries between the Venetian territory of Byzantium and Frankish Istria created an imbalance between the political and ecclesiastical organizations in the area: the lagoon section of the patriarchate of Grado, including the seat of the metropolitan himself, lay in Byzantine and (later) Venetian territory, while the Istrian part was in the same Frankish territory in

which Aquileia was located. This made disputes about the metropolitan's author-
ity over the Istrian bishoprics inevitable. A first attempt at solving the problem
was undertaken at the Synod of Mantua in 827. The synod subjected the Istrian
bishoprics to Aquileia and left a heavy imprint on Istrian history for the follow-
ing centuries.[83] But the dispute with Grado was far from resolved, and it took
until 1180 before the patriarch, who had his permanent seat in Venice from 1156
onwards,[84] finally renounced his metropolitan authority over Istria.[85] In the short
term, Patriarch Fortunatus was the biggest loser from the Treaty of Aachen, and
we may well wonder whether the Diet of Rižana would have taken place at all
without his mediation, diplomacy and support. The new political situation sol-
emnized by the Treaty of Aachen buried all his hopes of a united Venetian-Istrian
ecclesiastical province under the church of Grado. It must have been the frustra-
tion of these hopes that caused Fortunatus to abandon his pro-Frankish stance.
This culminated in his active support for the uprising of Liudewit, duke of Lower
Pannonia. He was forced to flee to Constantinople by way of Byzantine-held
Zadar in 821. In 824 Fortunatus was part of the Byzantine mission to Emperor
Louis the Pious, and he died soon afterwards in Francia.[86]

To sum up, the Frankish occupation of Byzantine Istria – which probably took
place in 788 but had certainly happened before the summer of 791 – brought about
great changes in the lives of its inhabitants. From the very start, the Istrians had to
participate in Charlemagne's war against the Avars. Not only did the new regime
demand soldiers, it also had heavy economic, material and financial requirements.
This led to an increase in existing taxes and the introduction of new ones, a series
of new services, as well as the abolishment of urban self-government controlled
by the local elites, who were made up of wealthy landlords. Authority in the prov-
ince was concentrated in the hands of Duke John, who implemented all these
demands and thus caused great discontent among the Istrians. After the Avar ques-
tion had been definitively settled, Charlemagne convened the provincial Diet of
Rižana near Capodistria (Koper) in the following year, 804. The mediation of
Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado was instrumental in this, since his metropolitan
authority extended over the bishoprics in Frankish Istria as well as the bishoprics
in Byzantine Venice.

The Diet eliminated almost all the changes that had been introduced by Duke
John. The danger of the Istrian urban elite feeling so alienated by the Franks that
they once again bowed down to Byzantium was averted. Charlemagne was free to
direct his forces towards the conquest of the Venetian lagoons, the last Byzantine
stronghold in the northern Adriatic. However, thanks to Byzantium's naval power
and consequent ability to defend the Dalmatian coastal towns, the campaign led
by Pippin, king of Italy, lasted for years and was eventually unsuccessful. Venice
and Grado remained beyond Charlemagne's reach. This balance of power was
sanctioned by the 812 Treaty of Aachen. The western emperor's willingness to
admit the limitations of his own power reflects a considerable amount of *Real-
politik*. The treaty's most prominent collateral victim was Patriarch Fortunatus
of Grado, leader of the pro-Frankish policy in the lagoons, whose goal of becom-
ing the metropolitan of a united Venetian-Istrian ecclesiastical province under

Frankish rule vanished into thin air. Disappointed, he switched allegiance to the Byzantine side.

Notes

 1 'dux de Histria [. . .] cum suis hominibus': Charlemagne, *Letter to Fastrada*, 528; see *FiF*, 148–49, 200. Charlemagne's letter to Fastrada must be given priority as a source over the *Annals of Lorsch* (*Annales Laureshamenses* s.a. 791, 34–35), which suggest that it was a larger military campaign and penetrated farther into the interior of the Avar khaganate. See Hauptmann 1929, 338–41; *ASM*, 316 and 462 n. 52; Bratož 1998, 151 and 151–52 n. 22; contra Deér 1965, 765 and n. 338; Gračanin 2011, 148–51.
 2 *Placitum Rizianense*.
 3 See Krahwinkler 2004, 105–06.
 4 Esders 1999, 49.
 5 *FiF*, 119–34.
 6 Jahn 1991, 522–50, esp. 540–50; Wolfram 1995, 90–93; Becher 2005.
 7 Margetić 1994, 8.
 8 See above, n. 1.
 9 Cuscito 2008, 418–40.
10 'pensiones beati Petri': *CodCar*, no. 63, 590; *DRSV*, vol. 1, no. 35.
11 *DRSV*, vol. 1, no. 33.
12 *FiF*, 144–45; Bratož 1994, 60.
13 *ASM*, 315–17; Wolfram 1995, 235–36.
14 *ASM*, 318; Wolfram 1995, 236–37.
15 Deér 1965, 762–66; *ASM*, 318–19.
16 *ARF* s.a. 796, 98–100; *ASM*, 319; *FiF*, 150.
17 Wolfram 1990, 318–21.
18 *ASM*, 319–20; *FiF*, 150–52, 158–64; Wolfram 1995, 224–26, 238–39; Bratož 1998, 154–79.
19 Hardt 2004, 42–44.
20 *ARF* s.a. 799, 106–09.
21 *ARF* s.a. 803, 117–18.
22 For a chronology of events, see Deér 1965, 725–26; *ASM*, 320–22; Wolfram 1995, 239–41. See also the chapter by Takács in this volume.
23 *Placitum Rizianense*, 76.
24 Esders 1999, 84.
25 *Placitum Rizianense*, 78.
26 *ARF* s.a. 791, 87–91.
27 *Placitum Rizianense*, 74–76.
28 Esders 1999, 80–89.
29 Margetić 1993, 417.
30 Mayer 1903, 261–66; Mayer 1909, vol. 2, 131; Ferluga 1987, 167.
31 Esders 1999, 82.
32 Centarchs were officers of lower rank than a tribune in the Byzantine army and should not be mistaken for Frankish *centenarii*; see Mayer 1903, 243, 266–67; Krahwinkler 2004, 133–34. This measure by Duke John again shows that the changes involved internal restructuring of Istria's military organization and were not a 'Frankish import'.
33 Esders 1999, 83.
34 *Placitum Rizianense*, 76.
35 Esders 1999, 84 and n. 81.
36 Mayer 1903, 265; Esders 1999, 84.
37 Esders 1999, 85.
38 Esders 1999, 85.

39 *Placitum Rizianense*, 78–79.
40 *Placitum Rizianense*, 76.
41 Brühl 1968, 534–37; Esders 1999, 87 and n. 88.
42 *Placitum Rizianense*, 76.
43 *Placitum Rizianense*, 78.
44 See e.g. Hlawitschka 1960, 212; Vilfan 1991, 59. For views dissenting from an over-emphasis on the introduction of Frankish feudalism and its exaggerated significance as a cause of the conflict in Istria, see Mayer 1903, 266; Esders 1999, 90; Krahwinkler 2004, 112. The measures introduced in Istria by Duke John were drawn primarily from the standard late antique repertoire of military and financial policies, used by the Byzantines as well as the early Carolingians; these laid the heaviest burden of military campaigns on the shoulders of local populations.
45 Classen 1983a, 89–98; Classen 1988, 5–10; Ferluga 1988, 169–70.
46 Ferluga 1978, 125–29; *BJ*, 150–58.
47 Kretschmayr 1905, 38–53; Carile and Fedalto 1978, 224–37; Ortalli 1980, 369–76.
48 *RKK*, no. 838; see Classen 1988, 91; *FiF*, 179. See also the chapters by Gelichi, Cerno and Skoblar in this volume.
49 Classen 1988, 91.
50 *DRSV*, vol. 1, no. 34.
51 JD[1], 99–100; Kretschmayr 1905, 53–54.
52 On Fortunatus, see Krahwinkler 2004, 115–21; Krahwinkler 2005.
53 *DRSV*, vol. 1, no. 37.
54 Carile and Fedalto 1978, 233; Ortalli 1980, 377–78; Krahwinkler 2005, 66–68.
55 *RKK*, no. 398b.
56 Charlemagne, *Diplomas*, no. 200, 269–70.
57 Charlemagne, *Diplomas*, no. 201, 270.
58 Krahwinkler 2001, 69.
59 See, for example, the chapters by Skoblar, Cerno and Basić in this volume.
60 Bratož 1994, 58–60; Krahwinkler 2001, 68–69.
61 *Concilium Mantuanum*, 586–87; *FiF,* 177.
62 *DRSV*, vol. 1, no. 31.
63 Charlemagne, *Diplomas*, no. 201, 270.
64 *Placitum Rizianense*, 68–70.
65 *Placitum Rizianense*, 68.
66 'in vestro fui adiutorio et nunc esse vollo': *Placitum Rizianense*, 68.
67 Esders 1999, 92.
68 *ARF* s.a. 803, 117–18; *RKK*, no. 398b.
69 *CodCar*, no. 63, 590.
70 See above, 60; Krahwinkler 2004, 114 and n. 19; Katičić 2007, 319–20. See also the chapter by Gračanin in this volume.
71 See Esders 1999, 72; Krahwinkler 2004, 118; Krahwinkler 2005, 66–68.
72 Kretschmayr 1905, 54–55; Ortalli 1980, 378.
73 *ARF* s.a. 806, 120–22.
74 Ferluga 1978, 100–01, 127–29; Ortalli 1980, 378–79; Classen 1988, 92.
75 *Divisio regnorum*, ch. 2, 127; Classen 1983b, 216–21.
76 Kretschmayr 1905, 56–59; Košćak 1980–1981, 302–05; Classen 1988, 92–94. See other chapters in this volume, especially that of Ziemann.
77 *ARF* s.a. 811, 133–35.
78 *FiF*, 137–42; Krahwinkler 2004, 122–23.
79 Classen 1988, 93–97.
80 *Codice diplomatico Istriano*, no. 56.
81 Mayer 1903, 283.
82 Esders 1999, 109–11.

83 *Concilium Mantuanum*; Schmidinger 1954, 12. See also the chapter by Cerno in this volume.
84 Fedalto 1999, 237–40.
85 Kehr 1927, 55–180; Schmidinger 1954, 16–17.
86 *ARF* s.a. 821, 154–57; s.a. 824, 164–67; see *FiF*, 215–20; Krahwinkler 2005, 72. See also the chapters by Majnarić, Szőke and Gračanin in this volume.

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Part II

Byzantium in turmoil

5 A resurgent empire? Byzantium in the early 800s

Panos Sophoulis

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set out the historical and political background against which Byzantium's troubles in the Adriatic developed from the end of the eighth century onwards. In order to understand the empire's strategic objectives in the region and assess the results of its policies there, attention first must be paid to developments inside Byzantium itself. It is, therefore, important to scrutinize its political history and try to unravel the forces – political, social and military alike – that shaped imperial policies from *c*. 780 to 812.

How powerful, then, was the Byzantine empire at the time? This is the fundamental question at the heart of this discussion. To be sure, the later eighth and early ninth centuries are viewed by many as a turning point in the history of the empire. Although still threatened by foreign powers, during this period Byzantium allegedly entered the early stages of a virtuous cycle, which would lead to the expansion and prosperity of the 'Macedonian' Age in the following two centuries. The beginnings of this recovery can be seen in the successful wars of Constantine V (741–775) in both the Balkans and the east, the re-organization and expansion of the theme system, the economic and demographic growth, even in the attempt to play a more active role in the affairs of the west, especially under Irene (797–802) and Nikephoros I (802–811).[1]

Byzantium buoyant?

The contrast to the so-called 'Dark Ages', extending roughly from the 620s to the middle of the eighth century, could not be starker. As a result of the Arab conquests, Byzantium's wealthiest provinces in the east had been lost. Devastated by continuous invasions and raids in Asia Minor, the Balkans, Italy and the Mediterranean, and cut off from the main trading routes of the Middle East, now focusing on Syria, Egypt and Iraq, the empire's economy had suffered severe recession.[2] What is more, as a result of the military crisis, prolonged political and dynastic instability had engulfed the Byzantine state. In short, the Dark Ages had been a time of military reverses, acute economic regression, political instability, and – equally importantly – declining culture and education.[3] That the Byzantine empire

managed to survive is mainly due to a mustering of its forces around the emperor and the church, associated with a series of reforms undertaken by the rulers of the seventh century, most notably Heraclius (610–641) and Constans II (641–668), and continued by members of the Isaurian dynasty in the eighth. As a result of these fundamental changes, a totally new, much more 'medieval' state and society emerged: the countryside was now of primary importance, the cities being relatively few in number and greatly reduced in size; the state became highly centralized, and the importance of Constantinople increased; the old nobility declined, and the free landholding and tax-paying peasantry became effectively the basis of society; and finally, the role of religion increased. In some ways, the reforming period may be said to have lasted through to the early 800s.[4]

As noted already, the first clear signs of recovery became visible in the middle of the eighth century, especially during the reign of Constantine V. It was this emperor who, taking advantage of the third *fitna* – the civil war in the caliphate between the Ummayads and the Abbasids (744–750) – raided, for the first time in almost a hundred years, deep into enemy territory in Syria, Cilicia and western Armenia.[5] Then in the early 760s, he diverted his military resources to the Balkans in an attempt to destabilize, if not destroy, the Bulgar state. In the next fifteen years he launched at least nine campaigns against the Bulgars, winning a number of major victories which earned him the reputation of a triumphant military leader.[6] At the same time, Constantine V initiated major re-building work at several sites, including the land-walls of the imperial capital, the Aqueduct of Valens and the Church of St Irene; presided over the Council of Hieria near Constantinople in 754, which officially condemned icon veneration; and carried out fundamental reform in the military with the creation of full-time, elite units (the *tagmata*), significantly improving the cohesion and effectiveness of the imperial army.[7] Compared with the political instability and defeatism of the previous hundred years, these achievements marked an important reassertion of imperial power which helped restore Byzantine self-confidence. To be sure, Constantine V tried to project himself as a victorious orthodox emperor: triumphal processions held in the Great Hippodrome in Constantinople (usually consisting of horse races and a parade of armed forces, prisoners of war and booty), as well as mural paintings depicting the emperor hunting or fighting against the barbarians, all reinforced this message.[8]

Further signs of a 'resurgent empire' are visible during the reign of Constantine V's immediate successors in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Empress Irene took a strong interest in Balkan affairs and, when possible, sent her armies against the *Sklaviniai* of Thrace, Macedonia, central Greece and the Peloponnese, seeking not only military success that could boost the reputation of her insecure regime, but also the re-conquest of strategically and economically important regions.[9] This gradual territorial expansion is reflected in the number of towns and fortresses that were rebuilt and populated in the Balkans, as indicated both by contemporary written sources and by archaeological material, such as the dated inscription found in the western section of the city wall in Stara Zagora (Beroia) in 2005.[10] Administration and culture spread from these urban centres to

the countryside, and gradually some of its Slav population appears to have been incorporated into the Byzantine Christian world.[11]

This reassertion of imperial authority is also reflected in Irene's active involvement in Italian affairs, initially by making arrangements for the betrothal of her son to Charlemagne's daughter Rotrud, then by sending an army to Benevento, in support of Adelchis, the pretender to the Lombard throne.[12] Behind Irene's actions lay, of course, the hope of re-establishing some effective power in central Italy, as over the previous half century, Byzantine attention had steadily shifted away from the west.

Nikephoros' reforms and fiscal competence, and military confidence

During the reign of Nikephoros I (802–811) the political and economic recovery of the empire became more solid. Apart from continuing Irene's efforts to reclaim territories controlled by the Slavs and adopting an even more aggressive stance towards Charlemagne, a stance that eventually led to all-out conflict for the control of Venice and the Dalmatian coast, Nikephoros is credited with a series of reforms in the administrative, military and financial spheres, which improved the efficiency of the bureaucracy and the army, but also increased the revenues of the state.[13] To mention just one example, he was responsible for the reorganization of the system of recruitment into the thematic (provincial) armies. In order to counter the reduction in military manpower (due to the fact that many of the individuals who owed military service on a hereditary basis, with the requirement to provide their own mounts and equipment, had become impoverished), Nikephoros arranged for the village community to cover the cost through an annual contribution of 18 1/2 *nomismata*, while at the same time, the members of the fiscal community (*homochoroi*, or 'neighbours') were made responsible for the enrolled man's public taxes.[14] The emperor thus ensured both effective recruitment to the army and regular payment of taxes.

What is more, he introduced a series of economic and fiscal measures, targeting mainly the upper class and rich ecclesiastical institutions, which were now expected to contribute more than they had previously done; he confiscated monastic property, countered tax evasion by revising the tax register, abolished unjustified privileges and increased custom duties and taxes on inheritance.[15] Despite the fact that some members of the nobility and the clergy bitterly decried these measures, it is clear that the empire benefited greatly from them. To judge from Michael I's excessive spending between 811 and 813, his predecessor must have left the state treasury full. It has also been suggested that the surpluses under Theophilos (829–842) and his wife Theodora (97,000 and 197,000 pounds of gold, respectively) had their roots in Nikephoros' prudent handling of the imperial economy.[16]

By the year 811, therefore, economic activity, demographic trends and agricultural production seemingly continued on an upward course in most parts of the empire. Byzantium was clearly richer than at any time since the mid-seventh

century; it appears to have been more densely populated, in fact population levels had recovered after the last outbreak of the plague in 747–748;[17] the government was now able to recruit thousands of new soldiers, increasing the strength of the imperial army; it also controlled more territories and peoples than it had done in the previous hundred years. Quite naturally, it felt confident enough to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy, particularly in the Balkans and the Adriatic. The growing pretensions and aspirations of the late-eighth- and early-ninth-century rulers were partly fed by the successes of Constantine V and the image of victorious warrior-emperor which he had so skilfully constructed. However, this image, as well as the ideologically driven claims associated with it, forced the empire into political and diplomatic positions which, in reality, were untenable.

Indeed, despite the unmistakable revival of its fortunes, during the period in question the empire still faced serious difficulties, which inevitably compromised its political and military potential. One of the main problems was the volatility it experienced at the top following the death of Constantine V. As political machinations occupied much of the attention of the ruling circles, none of his immediate successors was able to establish a secure regime. Irene's right to reign alone was always in question because of her gender. From the outset, her position was challenged by members of her own family (including her son Constantine VI, who was blinded on her orders in 797); by the armed forces, which looked for a male emperor to lead them into battle; and by her closest allies in the civil service, who gradually obtained so much power that they could aspire to oust her from power, as the general logothete Nikephoros eventually did in 802.[18] The deposition of Irene, the last member of the Isaurian dynasty, created an even greater crisis of legitimacy. Nikephoros I, Michael I (811–813) and Leo V (813–820) were all unable to entrench themselves in power to the complete satisfaction of important political and military interests, and this clearly undermined the effectiveness of the state machine.

External pressures on Byzantium

Exacerbating Byzantine difficulties in the early ninth century was the growing pressure exerted on the empire by the Arabs, the Franks and the Bulgars. During this period, the Muslim world was internally peaceful, leaving the caliphs free to concentrate their enormous resources against Byzantium. This was particularly so in the case of Harun al-Rashid, whose personal involvement with jihad is reflected in the transfer of his residence to Raqqa, in the frontier district in Syria. This meant constant pressure from annual campaigns into Anatolia, a large part of which remained a war zone until the outbreak of the fourth *fitna* in the caliphate in 808/809.[19] In the west, Charlemagne challenged the empire for control of southern Italy and Sicily, and after his coronation as 'emperor of the Romans' by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800, he applied local pressure along the Adriatic in an attempt to force the government at Constantinople to recognize his imperial title.[20] Meanwhile in the Balkans, the situation deteriorated sharply following Nikephoros' death in Bulgaria in the summer of 811. For the next three years, the

Bulgar khan Krum became Byzantium's most dangerous enemy, bringing temporarily under his sway large parts of Thrace and Macedonia, and pushing eventually as far as Constantinople itself.[21]

At the same time as warfare on three fronts destabilized the empire and strained its resources, the theological debate between iconoclasts and iconodules divided the whole of Byzantine society.[22] Factionalism in the upper echelons of the state also affected the army: Irene conducted a gradual purge of the military commanders appointed by her iconoclast predecessors, but in so doing she greatly weakened the imperial forces.[23] The inability of the army to stop Arab encroachment on the fertile plains of western Asia Minor, previously well protected, as well as the repeated defeats at the hands of the Bulgars were symptoms of this process.

The exceptional degree of unrest in the army was another important problem. The worsening crisis of imperial legitimacy, the frustration resulting from military defeats and incompetent leadership, the inability of Constantine V's successors to maintain close ties with the troops, as well as the question of iconoclasm, all led to a breakdown in military solidarity with the throne and growing reluctance of commanders and soldiers to follow the lead of the government in Constantinople. In fact, the period between *c*. 780–813 was among the most turbulent for the armies in the history of the Byzantine empire, with at least sixteen incidents of military unrest recorded in the sources.[24]

Careful attention to the reality behind Byzantine rhetoric, therefore, reveals that the empire, despite its unquestionable progress over the previous fifty years, was still highly vulnerable in the early years of the ninth century. Charlemagne's imperial pretensions, coupled with the humiliating defeats at the hands of Harun al-Rashid and Krum, struck a hard blow to Byzantium's prestige and reaffirmed that it was merely a medium-sized state, still fighting a battle for survival.

Realpolitik behind the rhetoric?

The question arises: was Byzantium actually aware of its own weaknesses? Behind the rhetorical ambitions for dominion over territories and peoples that had ceased to be under effective imperial control, are there glimpses of some sort of *Realpolitik*? The Treaty of Aachen and the recognition of Charlemagne as 'emperor of the Franks' by Michael I is not necessarily an example for this.[25] In 812 the empire was clearly in a state of emergency; the magnitude of the defeat by, and Nikephoros I's death at the hands of, the Bulgars in the previous year had come as a profound shock to the Byzantines. In addition, Michael was, by all accounts, a feeble ruler who was prepared to pay any price in order to avoid a prolonged struggle in the Adriatic that could destabilize his regime. Nevertheless, Nikephoros is depicted by the sources as a remarkably strong personality, and some of his dealings with his neighbours reveal a pragmatic politician seeking accommodation at a manageable cost. His pragmatism is evident in the resumption of negotiations with the Carolingian court following the death of Pippin, king of Italy, in July 810, and in the replacement of direct confrontation with a military alliance with the Franks.[26]

Indeed, although our surviving sources are not very helpful, it would be tempting to suggest that during the negotiations between the summers of 810 and 811, Nikephoros was already proclaiming his intention to recognize Charlemagne as *basileus*. In return, the latter, as is well known, renounced his claims to Venice and Dalmatia in the autumn of 810.[27] But this may not have been all. It is possible that Nikephoros, who was already planning to deliver a decisive blow to Krum, may have requested Frankish assistance in doing so. Western sources seem to support this hypothesis: the *Annales regni Francorum* reports that directly after the customary general assembly was held at Aachen in the spring of 811, and while negotiations with Byzantium were still ongoing, Charlemagne sent his armies into three provinces of his empire. One of them went into Pannonia to bring to an end the quarrels between the 'Huns' [Avars] and Slavs, an action that would have undoubtedly alarmed the Bulgars, who had demonstrated a serious interest in the former Avar territories.[28] This was, in fact, the first Frankish campaign in that region since 803.[29] It may be no coincidence that, three years later, Leo V sent an embassy to the Franks requesting help against the Bulgars, who were now planning an assault on Constantinople.[30] This may well suggest that Charlemagne had earlier accepted a similar invitation for an anti-Bulgar coalition from Nikephoros.

Byzantium's *rapprochement* with the Franks, and the possible attempt to turn the tables around by forming an alliance with them, demonstrates both an awareness of its inherent weakness, but also a remarkable flexibility in its response to external challenges. Unlike some of its neighbours, the empire in the later eighth and early ninth centuries was not a superpower, and this placed very clear limits on the political objectives it could pursue. This was obviously something that the government at Constantinople well understood. Thus, behind the inevitable propaganda intended for internal consumption, it is possible to see the pragmatism required for the proper handling of imperial affairs. Although during this period the empire appears to have retained the political or military initiative, its objectives were in reality very limited: to maintain its standing as a regional power and sole heir to the Roman empire; to contain its enemies from threatening imperial territory; and, where possible, to reclaim lands controlled by less powerful and dangerous opponents. The contemporary political and military record, notably the concessions to Charlemagne and the victories of Harun-al Rashid and Krum, make it clear beyond any doubt that the imperial authorities failed to achieve most of these goals. In this light, the notion of a resurgent empire or even of a Byzantine revival should perhaps be reconsidered. Although clearly in the ascendancy, Byzantium in the early 800s was a shadow of its old self and, at the same time, a far cry from the powerful state that emerged in the late ninth and tenth centuries under the Macedonian emperors.

Notes

1   Laiou 2002a, 16.
2   For an excellent discussion, see Whittow 1996, 82–95. On the impact of the Arab conquests on the empire's economy, see Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 38–42. For evidence for the decline of monetization during the Dark Ages, see Morrisson 2002, 954–57.

3 An overview of developments inside Byzantium during this period is provided by Treadgold 1997, 287–345. For the declining education and culture in the empire, see Lemerle 1971, 74–108.

4 For an analysis, focusing on the changes in the empire's civil, fiscal and military organization, see Haldon 1990, 92–253; see also Whittow 1996, 96–113, 126–33; Laiou 2002a, 14–15; Louth 2008, 236–48.

5 On the events that led to the downfall of the Ummayad dynasty, see Kennedy 1986, 112–23. In the course of his eastern campaigns, Constantine V captured Germanikeia (744/745), Theodosioupolis and Melitene (750/751). For an overview of his policy towards the Arabs, see Rochow 1994, 73–87.

6 For these events, see Primov 1978, 24–35; Rochow 1994, 89–105; Ziemann 2007, 213–34. For an alternative interpretation of Constantine V's strategic objectives, see Shepard 1995, 232–33.

7 For Constantine's building programme, see Peschlow 1977, 212–13; Foss and Winfield 1986, 53–54, 100; Rochow 1994, 36–39. For the Council of Hieria and Constantine's attempts to enforce iconoclasm upon his subjects, see Gero 1977, 53–142; Thümmel 2005, 63–78. On the creation of the *tagmata*, see Haldon 1984, 228–56.

8 McCormick 1986, 134–37.

9 See for instance Theoph., 456, lines 25–29; Mansi, vol. 12, cols 990C–E.

10 The list of participants in the Second Council of Nicaea (787) records some thirty bishoprics from Thrace, many of which were not mentioned in the sources of the first half of the eighth century: Darrouzès 1975, 20, 29–30, 54–55, 62–68; Lilie 1977, 42–43. For the rebuilding of Beroia and Anchialos in Thrace, see Theoph., 457, lines 8–11; Sharankov and Yankov 2008.

11 *BaB*, 163. The restoration of imperial authority at Anchialos, which had been destroyed by the Bulgars during the 760s, is attested by the discovery of the seal of a certain Niketas, *hypatos* and *basilikos kandidatos*, dated to the last quarter of the eighth century: Jordanov 1993, 39.

12 Theoph., 455, lines 19–25; 463, lines 21–27; 464, lines 2–8; *Annales Mosellani*, 497; *BR*, 91–92.

13 For a discussion, see *BaB*, 173–78.

14 Theoph., 486, lines 23–26; Haldon 1979, 41–51.

15 For these measures, see Brătianu 1938, 183–216; Niavis 1987, 93–113; *BR*, 149–52.

16 *BR*, 191. On Michael I's distribution of largesse to churches, monasteries, the Senate, the army and the poor, see Theoph., 494, lines 8–11; 493, line 32–494, line 5; 494, lines 15–18; 500, lines 9–10; *Historia de Leone Bardae Armenii filio*, 335, line 8–336, line 3.

17 Laiou 2002b, 49–50; Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 92.

18 Speck 1978, vol. 1, 221–35, 302–05; Lilie 1996, 79–115, 220–91.

19 Theoph., 465, lines 12–26; 471, lines 20–27; 482, lines 1–23; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, vol. 3, 2, 8–9, 12, 16.

20 For Charlemagne's coronation, see Theoph., 475, lines 11–15; *ARF* s.a. 801, 112; Niavis 1987, 74–76, 178–85.

21 For the defeat of 811, see *Chronicle of 811*; the chapter by Ziemann in this volume. A detailed discussion of these events is provided by *BaB*, 192–216, 221–45, 249–57.

22 Speck 1978, vol. 1, 56–66; Lilie 1996, 61–70.

23 For instance, around 786 Irene dismissed a large number of the *tagmata*, ordering some 6,000 troops, together with their families, to return to their places of origin. Earlier, these men had violently broken up the proceedings of a church council at Constantinople which was designed to restore the veneration of religious images: Theoph., 461, line 16–462, line 3; 462, lines 5–18; Mansi, vol. 12, cols 990E, 991B–C; Constantine of Tios, *Encomium*, ch. 11, 97–99.

24 Kaegi 1981, 254–61.

25 Theoph., 494, lines 20–22; *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

26 For the exchange of embassies following Pippin's death, see *ARF* s.a. 810, 132. See also the chapters by Ančić, Majnarić and Štih in this volume.

27 *ARF* s.a. 812, 133–34; *VKM*, 18.
28 'Imperator vero pace cum Hemmingo firmata et placito generali secundum consuetudinem Aquis habito in tres partes regni sui totidem exercitus misit, unum trans Albiam in Linones, qui et ipsos vastavit et castellum Hohbuoki superiori anno a Wilzis distructum in ripa Albiae fluminis restauravit, alterum in Pannonias ad controversias Hunorum et Sclavorum finiendas, tertium in Brittones ad eorum perfidiam puniendam': *ARF* s.a. 811, 134–35.
29 For the Frankish campaigns against the Avar khaganate from the 790s onwards, see *ASM*, 288–323.
30 *Annales Laurissenses minores*, 122; Amalarius, *Versus marini*, 428; *ARF* s.a. 814, 140–41.

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6 Franks and Bulgars in the first half of the ninth century

Angel Nikolov

Until the early ninth century, the Franks and Bulgars were separated by the Avar khaganate, which seems to have presented an obstacle to the establishment of direct political relations between them. Charlemagne's successful military campaigns against the Avars during the 790s undermined the khaganate's dominance, and its disintegration allowed the Franks and the Bulgars to expand their respective territories in the region of the Middle Danube. However, the new status quo there was marked by instability and unpredictability, as evidenced by the later migrations of various groups of former Avar subjects, an essentially spontaneous process, which ultimately forced the Franks and Bulgars to formalise their relations.

From the perspective of the Franks and, in this particular case, through the eyes of Notker of St Gall, who was using the accounts of an eyewitness and participant in the war against the Avars under the command of Charlemagne's son-in-law Gerold (d. 799), the demise of the Avar state around the beginning of the ninth century could be summarized as follows:

> For two hundred years and more the Huns [Avars] had swept the wealth of the western states within these fortifications, and as the Goths and Vandals were disturbing the repose of the world at the same time the western world was almost turned into a desert. But the most unconquerable Charles so subdued them in eight years that he allowed scarcely any trace of them to remain. He withdrew his hand from the Bulgarians, because after the destruction of the Huns they did not seem likely to do any harm to the kingdom of the Franks. All the booty of the Huns, which he found in Pannonia, he divided most liberally among the bishoprics and the monasteries.[1]

For the Franks, the purpose of the war would seem to have been the destruction of the khaganate, the plundering and redistribution of its wealth and the strengthening of their power in the newly acquired territories of Upper and Lower Pannonia; but for the Bulgars, who like the Avars came from the nomadic world of the steppes, things looked rather different. According to the *Suidae lexicon*, the late-tenth-century Byzantine encyclopaedia, which makes no mention of Charlemagne's Avar campaigns:

> The Bulgars were pleased [to be drawn] into the clothing of the Avars and they adopted it and wear it right up to the present day [. . .] These same Bulgars

utterly annihilated the Avars. Krem asked the Avarian captives 'Why do you reckon your ruler and the whole people perished?' And they answered: 'the number of mutual accusations increased and destroyed the bravest and the most prudent; and then the wrong-doers and the thieves became associates of the judges; and then [there was] the drunkenness – for everyone became drunkards once the wine had become abundant; and then [there was] the bribery, and then the business dealings – for everyone became traders and started cheating one another. And from these things came our doom'. Having heard this [Krem] convened all the Bulgars and issued decrees as their lawgiver [. . .] They [sc. the Bulgars] utterly annihilated all the Avars, as it had been said.[2]

In this particular case it is irrelevant whether the laws issued by Krum (*c.* 803–814), as described in the *Suidae lexicon*, were part of an actual body of enforced legislation rather than literary fiction.[3] What is essential is to highlight the two key messages of this Byzantine text. Firstly, the Bulgars and Avars shared a taste in clothing, which prompts us to consider the difficult question of the outward manifestations of ethnic traditions and social standing among these two related communities, which had for centuries competed with each other. At any rate, Krum and his descendants seem to have regarded themselves as successors of the political traditions of the Avars,[4] whom they had defeated. This is also attested by the occasional use of the title khagan (*caganus*, *chaganos*) for the Bulgar ruler Boris I the Baptiser (852–889; d. 907), who was known by his Christian name of Michael in some Latin and Slavic sources, including the *Annals of St Bertin*,[5] the Old Bulgarian *Interpretation of Daniel*,[6] and the *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*.[7]

Secondly, once Krum had completed the job of destroying the Avars, he had to reorganize his own polity to avoid a similar fate befalling it. It would be logical to assume that such reforms were required mainly because of the pressing need of the ruler of the recently expanded state to secure legal instruments so as to be able to regularize and harmonize relations among his subjects, who were quite heterogeneous in terms of origin, language and religion.

It is important to note that through the conquest of some of the eastern Avar territories straddling the Danube and presumably stretching south-east of the lower reaches of the river Sava and along the river Tisza, Krum had considerably increased the political weight of the Bulgar state. The desire to strengthen and safeguard the conquered territories to his north-west from possible Byzantine encroachments to a large extent predetermined (along with some other factors) Krum's advance in 808–809 towards the largely desolate territories along the river Struma and around Serdika, almost completely abandoned by the empire. Ultimately, following Emperor Nikephoros' big march in the summer of 811 towards the Bulgar heartland, there was a long-term shift in the centre of Bulgar military activity towards Thrace, while in 812 the clashes which took part there and at the very walls of Constantinople forced Michael I to seek reconciliation with the Frankish empire.[8]

In 816 Emperor Leo V and Krum's successor, Omurtag (*c.* 815–831), signed a thirty-year peace treaty, which defined the borderline from Develtos on the Black Sea to the river Maritsa (Hebros). A settlement was reached regarding the Slav groups in this area, which over the previous four years had been the scene of

fierce military conflicts: they had to return to where they had lived before the start of the war.[9] This treaty guaranteed the peaceful relations between Byzantium and the Bulgars over the following two decades and was regarded by Omurtag and his successor Malamir (831–836) as the embodiment of efficient and astute diplomacy. In Malamir's inscription from 836 we find a clear reference to it: 'My father, the ruler Omurtag, made a thirty year peace and lived well with the Greeks. I too, lived well with them in the beginning, but the Greeks devastated our lands'.[10]

However, relations between the Franks and Bulgars remained unsettled, creating fertile grounds for future conflict. This was stirred by the attempts of some Slav groupings to move into Frankish territory – and under Frankish protection; they had, until then, been within the orbit of Bulgaria or just beyond its borders. Thus, towards the end of 818, Louis the Pious received emissaries from the Obodrites (*Praedenecenti*), Borna, duke of Dalmatia, and the Timociani 'who had recently revolted against the Bulgars'.[11] However, in the following year the Timociani, who had just settled near Lower Pannonia under Frankish protection, joined the uprising of the local duke Liudewit. Their subsequent fate remains unclear.[12]

At the end of 824 the emperor received 'the envoys of the Obodrites who are commonly called Praedenecenti and live in Dacia on the Danube as neighbours of the Bulgars', who 'complained about vicious aggression by the Bulgars and asked for help against them'.[13] The reception of these envoys coincided with exchanges between Franks and Bulgars of unprecedented intensity. Around the beginning of 824, Bulgar envoys arrived at the court of Louis the Pious for the first time, requesting on behalf of Omurtag that a peace treaty be concluded between the two countries:

> When the emperor had received them and had read the letters they brought, he was moved by the novelty of this matter to explore more thoroughly the cause of this unprecedented legation which never before had come to Francia. He sent Machelm, a Bavarian, with these envoys to the king of the Bulgars.[14]

In late 824 a second Bulgar embassy arrived in Bavaria.[15] However, it was not until mid-May 825 that these envoys were received by Louis as part of the imperial council (*conventum*) convened there. Considering the purpose of Omurtag's second embassy – 'the determination of the borders between Franks and Bulgars'[16] – the emperor had every reason to play for time, what with the lack of sufficient information and a reluctance to enter into serious negotiations at that particular moment. At the beginning of 826, the absence of a clear answer from the Franks provoked the Bulgar ruler to send his first emissary to Louis, serving the emperor an ultimatum: 'that the borders be determined (*terminorum definitio*) without further delay, or, if this was not acceptable to the emperor, that each should guard his frontiers without a peace treaty (*sine pacis foedere*)'.[17]

Thus, Omurtag's main demands to the Frankish emperor during the negotiations of 824–826 are clear: a peace treaty and a delimitation of the border between the two polities. As Florin Curta notes, 'the insistent demand for a treaty on the common border is strikingly reminiscent of his [Omurtag's] preoccupation with

the border between Bulgaria and Byzantium reflected in the Suleyman Köy pillar inscription',[18] that is the treaty of 816. No less apposite is the following remark by the same scholar: 'Perhaps Omurtag wanted a division of the areas of influence in the southern region of the Carpathian basin, which would clearly assign Slavic loyalties in the region to either power'.[19]

In fact, Curta's second observation adds weight to the first: the subject of the 816 treaty with Byzantium was not only the borders but also the Slav groups in the Thracian border areas. Considering the conflict between the Bulgars and the Timociani and Obodrites, it is logical to assume that it would have been very convenient for Omurtag to reproduce this model, which had already proved its efficacy along his south-eastern border with Byzantium, in the remote north-western reaches, along the border with Bulgaria's other imperial neighbour. It could be said that in the 820s the border demarcation and defence system had already taken a definite shape, a fact which justified Pope Nicholas I to refer to it as a well-established tradition in his *Responsa ad consulta Bulgarorum* (866):

> You claim that it is part of the custom of your country that guards always stand on the alert between your country and the boundaries of others; and if a slave or freeman [manages to] flee somehow through this watch, the guards are killed without hesitation because of this.[20]

Here we shall not go into the details of the 827–829 war between the Bulgars and the Franks waged in the territory of Lower and Upper Pannonia. However, the account in the *Annales regni Francorum*, concerning Bulgar troops movements in 827, deserves special attention: 'The Bulgars sent an army on ships up the Drave and harassed the Slavs living in Pannonia with fire and sword. They expelled the Slavic chieftains and appointed Bulgar governors instead'.[21]

Was this an attempt to conquer new territories and supplant the local Slav tribal leaders (*duces*) with Bulgar governors (*rectores*)? Such an interpretation is probable, but it is no less likely that they were military campaigns whose ultimate goal was not to establish full control over new lands,[22] but to deport certain Slav groups, who had broken away from the Bulgars several years earlier, from their places of refuge in Lower Pannonia to the Bulgar hinterland.[23] It should be remembered that the 816 treaty between Byzantium and Bulgaria implicitly endorses the principle that the conquest of certain territories gives rise to jurisdiction over the local Slav (non-Roman) population, even in those cases when they have already left the territory.[24] It is likely that Omurtag also wished to apply this principle in his dealings with the Frankish empire, which could at least partially explain Louis the Pious' unwillingness to sign the peace treaty proposed by the Bulgars.

In itself the replacement of the local *duces* with Bulgar *rectores* was not seen by the Franks as something extraordinary. They had themselves used such tactics in the eastern territories recently annexed to their empire. But the *Annales regni Francorum*'s account of the march of Omurtag's armies against the Pannonian Slavs in 827 suggests a new trend, whose origin should be sought in Krum's wars: the Bulgar rulers would gradually deprive the subjected Slav groups of their

political autonomy and adopt a more or less standardized local government system whereby 'tribal-military institutions seem to have been converted into administrative state offices'.[25]

According to the *Annals of St Bertin*, in 866, when there was an uprising in Bulgaria against the imposition of Christianity, the country was already divided into ten large territorial and administrative units (*comitatus*), and these were still in existence in the second half of the tenth century.[26] The very name of these units is quite impressive, as is the title of their governors, *comites*: these were terms used, with meaning varying according to time and place, both in Byzantium and in the Frankish empire. Although founded upon the age-old traditions of the steppes, due to its massive territorial enlargement, a steadily growing proportion of its population being of non-Bulgar – mainly Slav – ethnic origin, and the widening of its political contacts in the first half of the ninth century, Bulgaria began to transform into a European state, albeit still a pagan one.

As for relations between the Franks and Bulgars, it appears that around 830–831 they signed a peace treaty. In 832, Emperor Louis received Bulgar emissaries who brought him gifts.[27] In the years that followed, the Bulgars would support Ratimir, the *dux* of Pannonia, until his political elimination by the Franks in 838, and offer assistance to the Slav leaders Pribina and Kocel, who were banished from Moravia.[28] After the signing of the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the Bulgar ruler Presian (837–852) sent envoys to Louis the German, king of East Francia, in 845.[29] It seems quite likely that it was then that the peace treaty signed between the Frankish empire and the Bulgars around 831 was reformulated and reaffirmed. Such diplomatic procedures can be surmised from the fact that another Bulgar mission was sent to Louis the German in 852, when Boris mounted the throne.[30]

Towards the middle of the ninth century, relations between Franks and Bulgars were already routine in nature, even though in the following few years they underwent a series of changes. It is remarkable that, although Charlemagne chose to ignore Bulgaria, and his son Louis the Pious regarded the Bulgar embassies as something exotic, the third generation of Carolingian rulers not only maintained stable relations with the rulers of Pliska but even tried to use them as allies in the settling of their tangled affairs. Evidence of this can be found in the *Annals of St Bertin*, where under 853 it is recorded that the West Frankish king Charles the Bald managed to incite Boris and the Moravians against his brother, Louis the German.[31] The losses which the East Franks and Prince Trpimir's Croats inflicted on the Bulgars in the course of this military campaign made the young Boris reconsider his foreign policy and prepared the ground for his Christianization.[32]

Notes

1 Notker Balbulus, *Gesta* II.1, 50–51; trans. in *Early Lives of Charlemagne*, 107–08. For discussion, see Curta and Stuckey 2011, 185–86.

2 *SL*, vol. 1, 483–84; trans. Kiril Galev <www.stoa.org/sol-entries/beta/423> [last accessed 17 May 2016].

3 Naydenova 2006. The legendary character of the *Suidae lexicon* account was pointed out by Vasil Gjuzelev (1966, 21). The historicity of the story about the annihilation of the Avar khaganate by Krum has been questioned by Panos Sophoulis (*BaB*, 181): 'The story probably has its origin in the growing Bulgar involvement in that region in the early 800s. Krum is very likely to have imposed tribute on certain groups settled north or northwest of the *khanate*, but in general, Bulgar expansion in this direction was limited'. See also Schwarcz 2000, 100–01; Ziemann 2007, 285–87, 311. Some scholars regard the *Suidae lexicon* account as a source of information on actual early-ninth-century events: *ASM*, 322; Shepard 1995, 233.

4 Pavlov 1997, 60–61; A. Nikolov 2006, 35. See also Curta 2006a, 2; Stepanov 2008; *BaB*, 71–72.

5 'Hludouuicus rex Germaniae hostiliter obuiam Bulgarorum cagano [. . .] nomine, qui se christianum fieri uelle promiserat, pergit, inde ad componendam Vuinidorum mar-cam, si se prosperari uiderit, perrecturus': *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 864, 113.

6 'And when the beginning of the sorrows of the world comes, Michael Kagan will arise among the Bulgarians': Tapkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 2011, 181. The text was composed in the second half of the eleventh century. See also DiTommaso 2005, 147, 507–08.

7 'Praeerat eis quidam nomine Kris, quem lingua sua "cagan" appellabant [. . .]': *Ljeto-pis Popa Dukljanina*, 44. See also *Hrvatska kronika*, 260.

8 On Krum's rule in general, see Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 126–43; Ziemann 2007, 241–87; A. Nikolov 2011; *BaB*, 173–264. See also the chapter by Ziemann in this volume.

9 For discussion of the treaty, see Treadgold 1984–1985; *BR*, 216–17; Curta 2011; *BaB*, 275–86.

10 Beshevliev 1992, 136; trans. from Petkov 2008, 12.

11 *ARF* s.a. 818, 149; trans. *CarCh*, 104. In 818, Borna is referred to as 'ducus Gudus-canorum'; however, by the following year, the *Annales* styles him 'dux Dalmatiae'.

12 On these, see Komatina 2010, 56–59. Komatina believes that both the Timociani and the Obodrites belonged to the seven Slav tribes which allied themselves with Aspa-rouch in 681 and remained under Bulgar suzerainty until the conclusion of the peace treaty of 816.

13 *ARF* s.a. 824, 165–66; trans. *CarCh*, 116.

14 *ARF* s.a. 824, 164; trans. *CarCh*, 115.

15 *ARF* s.a. 824, 165; *CarCh*, 116.

16 'de terminis ac finibus inter Bulgaros et Francos constituendis': *ARF* s.a. 825, 167; trans. *CarCh*, 117. On the terminology employed here, see Stieldorf 2012, 66–67.

17 *ARF* s.a. 826, 168; trans. *CarCh*, 118.

18 Curta 2006b, 157. See also Curta 2011, 22; *BaB*, 295.

19 Curta 2006b, 157.

20 'Consuetudinis esse patriae vestrae perhibetis semper custodes inter patriam ves-tram et aliorum iuxta terminos invigilare; et si servus aut liber per eandem custodiam quocumque modo fugerit, sine omni intermissione custodes pro eo interimuntur': Nicholas I, *Epistolae*, no. 99, 579; trans. *Responses of Pope Nicholas I*.

21 'Bulgari quoque Sclavos in Pannonia sedentes misso per Dravum navali exercitu ferro et igni vastaverunt et expulsis eorum ducibus Bulgaricos super eos rectores consti-uerunt': *ARF* s.a. 827, 173; trans. *CarCh*, 122.

22 Some modern scholars are sceptical about the scale of the 827 Bulgarian invasion in Pannonia, e. g. Stieldorf 2012, 375 n. 124: 'Die Annales skizzieren einen Angriff von weitreichenden politischen Konsequenzen. Dies ist für unsere Überlegungen insofern von Belang, als in der unmittelbaren Folge und auch den folgenden Jahresberichten nicht auf ein fränkisches Vorgehen in Pannonien abgehoben wird, aber auch keine bul-garischen duces in diesem Raum mehr genannt wird. Von einem massiven Angriff muß

also nicht zwangsläufig ausgegangen werden'. It is not our intention to discuss here the controversial questions of the roots, reach and aftermath of the Bulgarian campaigns in Pannonia in 827 and 829. A useful overview of the literature on this can be found in Gračanin 2011, 170–75. See also Gjuzelev 1966, 25–33; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 150–53; Schwarcz 2000, 101–03; Ziemann 2007, 312–16; *BaB*, 293–97.

23 In this context one should bear in mind that among the pagan Bulgars – judging from their stone inscriptions – power was primarily understood as power over peoples: Pohl 2003, 586.

24 'The second chapter is about the Slavs under imperial rule. They should stay where they were when the war began. The third chapter is about the Slavs who live along the sea coast and are not ruled by the Emperor. He should send them back to their settlements': Petkov 2008, 7. See also Beshevliev 1992, 164 (Greek text).

25 Curta 2006b, 157.

26 'Quotquot igitur fuerunt intra decem comitatus, adunauerunt se circa palatium eius': *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 866, 133. On the title *comes* in early medieval Bulgaria, see *BaB*, 75–76. See also G. Nikolov 2005, 89–93.

27 *Reichschronik des Annalista Saxo*, 66; *Annales Lobienses*, 232.

28 Gjuzelev 1966, 35–37; Bowlus 1995, 104; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 162; Ziemann 2007, 314; Gračanin 2011, 175–78.

29 *Annales Fuldenses*, 35. See also Gjuzelev 1966, 37; Bowlus 1995, 110; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 162; Ziemann 2007, 343; Gračanin 2011, 183–84.

30 *Annales Fuldenses*, 42. See also Gračanin 2011, 184.

31 'Bulgari, sociatis sibi Sclauis et, ut fertur, a nostris muneribus inuitati, aduersus Lodouuicum Germaniae regem acriter permouentur, sed Domino pugnante uincuntur': *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 853, 68. See also Dvornik 1970, 47, 309, 336; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 169–70; Curta 2006a, 1; Ziemann 2007, 349; Gračanin 2011, 184, 186.

32 *DAI*, ch. 31, 150. See also Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 170; Ziemann 2007, 349–50; Gračanin 2011, 186–87.

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7   Dangerous neighbours

The Treaty of Aachen and the
defeat of Nikephoros I by the
Bulgars in 811

Daniel Ziemann

At the end of July 811, a year before the Treaty of Aachen, the Byzantine emperor
Nikephoros I's campaign against the Bulgars ended in disastrous defeat. Although
the campaign started out successfully and the Byzantine army captured the resi-
dence or palace of Krum, the Bulgar ruler – generally assumed to have been in
Pliska – the army was then trapped by the Bulgars in the narrow canyons of the
Balkan mountains. In the ensuing battle, which is thought to have taken place on
26 July 811, Nikephoros died together with most of his army, leaving the way
open for subsequent Bulgar invasions and conquests.[1]

This chapter will attempt to shed some light on the events of 811 and their
influence on the Treaty of Aachen in the following year. It argues that the Bulgar
campaign of 811 has been underestimated in this context, certainly when com-
pared to the analysis dedicated to imperial titles and conflicts in Dalmatia and
the Adriatic. It also demonstrates that the Byzantine embassy sent by Michael I
(811–813), which arrived in Aachen in 812 and was led by Michael, bishop of
Synada, together with the *prōtospatharioi* Theognostos and Arsaphios, presented
a sanitized view of events in 811.

The Byzantine embassy of 812

The Treaty of Aachen is closely linked to the military defeat of Nikephoros I by
the Bulgars in 811. The emperor himself lost his life, together with countless
Byzantine soldiers, including many high military dignitaries. The *Annales regni
Francorum*, our main source for the treaty, mentions the two events within one
thematic block.[2] The *Annales* notes succinctly that after 'many and extraordi-
nary victories', the emperor lost his life in Moesia in battle against the Bulgars.
After Nikephoros' son-in-law, Michael, became emperor in 811 he received the
embassy that had been sent by Charlemagne to Nikephoros and dispatched them
back to Aachen, together with the three aforementioned ambassadors of his own.[3]
On arrival in Aachen they met Charlemagne and received from him in the palace
church the written document of the peace treaty. According to the *Annales*, the
ambassadors then praised him in Greek, calling him emperor and *basileus*.

Nikephoros' death on the battlefield and the confirmation of the peace are the
only events linked to the Byzantine embassy registered by the *Annales regni*

Francorum. Although the peace had already been initiated in 810, during a period of Byzantine expansion, Nikephoros' defeat and death dominated the political situation a year later and provided the background for the embassy. It is therefore interesting to see how the embassy conveyed the message of the Byzantines' defeat to the Frankish court. Since no additional Frankish sources about these events are known, the account in the *Annales regni Francorum* probably reflects the way events were presented by the embassy.

Thus, the condensed information offered by the *Annales* about Nikephoros' campaign against the Bulgars in 811 gives us some insight into how the Byzantine court tried to shape the course of events. Especially striking is the ambassadors' mention of 'many and extraordinary victories' before the emperor's death, echoing one of our two major Byzantine sources for the campaign. We should now take a closer look at these Byzantine sources before we return to the embassy and the Treaty of Aachen.

Theophanes and the *Chronicle of 811*

Our two main Byzantine sources for the campaign are Theophanes' *Chronographia* and the so-called *Chronicle of 811*. The latter is a famous thirteenth-century fragment, transmitted in a single manuscript which is preserved in the Vatican Library (Cod. Vat. Gr. 2014). It is sometimes called the Dujčev fragment or – with certain implications about its relationship to other texts – the *Scriptor incertus*. Various theories have been propounded about this fragment, which was published for the first time by Ivan Dujčev in 1936.[4] Recent research has also changed the general picture considerably regarding Theophanes, whose work may consist mainly of materials amassed by George Synkellos.[5] His utterly hostile attitude towards Nikephoros I makes the reader sceptical of some elements in his account. But since Theophanes' *Chronographia* was probably finished before the end of 814, he was at least close to the events.[6]

Dating the more detailed *Chronicle of 811* is more difficult. Most scholars, with the exception of Athanassios Markopoulos, agree that it contains elements written immediately after the events.[7] Some, such as Henri Grégoire, have also suggested that Theophanes might have used the *Chronicle of 811* for his own account.[8] Grégoire also argued that the later, modified *Chronicle of 811* originally formed part of a chronicle from which the so-called *Scriptor incertus* – another fragment covering the period between 813 and 820 – had also been excerpted.[9] If these assumptions are correct, the interesting sentence mentioning the baptism of the Bulgars in 864–865 can only be a later emendation, as Robert Browning and Ivan Dujčev suggest.[10] Lidija Tomić, however, takes the sentence as reason to date the *Chronicle of 811* to after the Bulgars' conversion.[11] Following this view, Markopoulos argues that the *Chronicle of 811* and the *Scriptor incertus* should be seen as separate texts, and that the former is mainly a hagiographic text produced to commemorate Byzantine martyrs.[12]

If the *Chronicle of 811* was written not long after the events of 811 and really was based on eyewitness accounts, the present fragmentary text, or at least a

part of it, must be the product of a later revision. Paul Stephenson has tried to distinguish the original from the additional parts and dates the latter to the 960s. His main argument is that the *Chronicle of 811* does not focus on the martyrs who died in Bulgar captivity after the battle, and they are only mentioned at the end.[13]

In general, the *Chronicle of 811* seems a preferable source for reconstructing the course of events. At first glance it is more detailed and a bit less polemical in its attitude towards Emperor Nikephoros. The question of whether it is indeed a part of a chronicle from which the so-called *Scriptor incertus* was excerpted is not central to our present discussion. Instead, it will be interesting to see how certain events are described in both sources and what conclusions can be drawn from them concerning the Treaty of Aachen. Some details of the two accounts of the battle might help us to evaluate their importance and interdependence. The general course of events is more or less identical in both sources: Nikephoros enters Bulgaria and conquers the palace of the Bulgar ruler, Khan Krum. But after the Bulgars block the mountain passes, the Byzantines find themselves in a trap. They are ambushed and routed. Nikephoros loses his life together with many of his soldiers and officers.

The interconnection between the two sources and scholarly preferences leave several questions open. Grégoire presents an argument for preferring the *Chronicle of 811* as a source, pointing to one of Theophanes' puzzling sentences: 'As for his effeminate servants (with whom he went to bed), some perished in the fire of the ditch'. This sentence makes better sense in light of the more detailed account from the *Chronicle of 811*:

> In other places, men set fire to the fence, and when the bonds [that held the logs together] burned through and the fence collapsed above the trench, those fleeing were unexpectedly thrown down and fell into the pit of the trench of fire, both themselves and their horses.[14]

But for other aspects, including the time frame, Theophanes seems more logical. The *Chronicle of 811* mentions the wrong date for the battle, namely 23 July, and contradicts itself, since this did not fall on a Saturday.[15] It also places Nikephoros' fourteen-day march through Bulgaria after the destruction of Krum's palace; and although it mentions Serdika as one of his destinations, it never says whether he reached it:

> Next, not concerned with a swift departure, he marched through the midst of Bulgaria, wanting to reach Sardika, for he thought that he had destroyed all Bulgaria. After he had spent fifteen days entirely neglecting his affairs, and his wits and judgement had departed him, he was no longer himself, but was completely confused.[16]

Theophanes also mentions Serdika, but for another campaign in 809. Could it be possible that the *Chronicle of 811* is confused on this point?[17]

Theophanes follows a tighter schedule for the campaign: 'After making many detours through impassable country the rash coward recklessly entered Bulgaria on 20 July'. He continues by stating: 'For three days after the first encounters the emperor appeared to be successful'.[18] Describing the building of barriers by the Bulgars and Nikephoros' helpless reaction, he says, 'These moves occupied two days, Thursday and Friday'.[19] Theophanes explicitly states that the final battle took place on Saturday 26 July.[20] Thus Theophanes gives Nikephoros only seven days to enter Bulgar territory, occupy and destroy Krum's court, become trapped in the mountain passes and finally lose the decisive battle.

If we accept this account as credible it means that Theophanes' phrase 'the court of Kroummos' (αὐλή τοῦ Κρούμμου) cannot refer to Pliska, where Krum supposedly had his residence. Theophanes gives the Byzantines only three days to start out from Markellai, reach Krum's seat, conquer and destroy it and begin their withdrawal through the Balkan mountains (the Stara Planina). There they become aware of the blocked passes and wait for two more days before the battle takes place on Saturday 26 July. The battle itself cannot have taken place near Pliska because the setting described by both Theophanes and the *Chronicle of 811* suggests a mountainous environment. The story of the blocked passes would not make sense anywhere other than in the mountains of the Stara Planina, the only way to return to Thrace and Constantinople. However, three days would not have been enough to cover more than a hundred and fifty kilometres. Thus, Theophanes' 'court of Kroummos' could not have been Pliska.[21]

A solution suggested by Warren Treadgold is to read ἔνκεδα (ια´) instead of εἴκοσι (κ´) in order to let the campaign start on 11 July instead of 20 July. However, this is not convincing, since Theophanes covers events closely, day by day, after leaving Markellai.[22] He twice mentions the exact number of days: three successful days, followed by two rest days before the final battle. A longer, unmentioned period would not fit this description, nor would it fit the whole concept.[23] Again, following Theophanes' account, Pliska could not have been 'the court of Kroummos'.

Conversely, the *Chronicle of 811* allows for enough time to reach Pliska and return. It mentions that Nikephoros spent several days in Krum's palace before deciding to proceed to Serdika, and later a period of fifteen days during which Nikephoros increasingly neglected his affairs.[24] Although it provides some interesting details about the palace of the Bulgarian ruler, Krum, the *Chronicle of 811* is not necessarily based on an eyewitness report. Importantly, it contains no details that require any kind of inside knowledge. The description of Krum's palace uses *topoi* like 'great spoils', 'storehouses of his [Krum's] wine' or 'the terraces of the houses'.[25] No eyewitness is required for this type of description. The same is true of the atrocities committed by the Byzantine army and the emperor's weak character. Only the disastrous end to the battle is more logical in the *Chronicle of 811* than in Theophanes.

Both the *Chronicle of 811* and Theophanes distort their material slightly, or consciously ignore certain details – in Theophanes' case, for example, the successful Byzantine encounters with the Bulgars at the start of the campaign. Theophanes is silent about any successful battles. This is not surprising, since his hatred of

Nikephoros did not allow him to grant the emperor any kind of victory. Theophanes often turns to this narrative device whenever he wishes to express his dislike towards the ruling emperor.

The *Chronicle of 811*, in contrast, mentions two successful battles, but their order is hardly plausible:

> Then he [Nikephoros] entered and encamped in the palace of the first man of Bulgaria, named Krum, and finding there an army of hand-picked and armed Bulgars who had remained behind to guard the place, up to twelve thousand in number, he engaged battle with them and killed them all. Next in similar fashion he faced another fifty thousand in battle, and having clashed with them, destroyed them all.[26]

Two consecutive, large-scale battles after the conquest of Krum's palace do not really make sense, although it is quite likely that the Byzantines fought successfully at the start if they really did reach such a key place as Krum's palace. As noted, the *Annales regni Francorum* also speaks of 'post multas et insignes victorias in Moesia'.[27] But these victories must have taken place before entering Krum's palace, not long after entering Bulgar territory. It is highly likely that neither of the two Byzantine writers left their source material unchanged.

The way the Byzantine emissaries presented the events of 811 is indeed striking; they explicitly mention 'many and extraordinary victories'.[28] This resembles the *Chronicle of 811*'s description of the campaign, while Theophanes, in contrast, would do anything rather than mention Nikephoros' victories. However, Theophanes does allude to initial successes before dwelling on the final defeat; and given his attitude towards the emperor, such allusions may be read as hints of a significant Byzantine victory at the beginning.[29]

It is also possible that events from different military campaigns were merged into one. According to Theophanes, Nikephoros swore that he had spent the Easter of 809 in the court of Krum (ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ Κρούμμου).[30] Of course, Theophanes does not believe this, but there is no serious reason to exclude the possibility that Nikephoros had indeed succeeded in capturing one of Krum's palaces, be it Pliska or somewhere else, in 809. Theophanes has at least to admit that Nikephoros' army reconquered Serdika,[31] a place that is also mentioned in the *Chronicle of 811*.[32] It is therefore clear that the *Chronicle of 811* has simply mixed up the accounts of several campaigns and merged them into one.

As a result, I would argue that both the main sources, the *Chronicle of 811* and Theophanes' *Chronographia*, contain inconsistencies and distortions and are, of course, guided by political agendas. Theophanes has a strict and logical chronology. The *Chronicle of 811* presents more detail, especially about the flight of the Byzantines; but other passages, such as the description of Krum's palace, offer nothing but stereotypes which would not require an eyewitness. Nevertheless, following the arguments of Dujčev, Grégoire, Stephenson and others, it seems quite plausible that the *Chronicle of 811* is indeed an example of a chronicle which later underwent revision, recasting the text in hagiographic style.

The Bulgars and the Franks

Although the short sentence in the *Annales regni Francorum* does not contribute anything to the factual history of the campaign of 811, it is nevertheless an account that reflects the official view of the Byzantine court and could be the closest to the events described. This raises the question: what kind of information did the Frankish court hold about the Bulgars in 812?

It is exactly then – in connection with the Treaty of Aachen – that the *Annales regni Francorum* mentions the Bulgars for the first time. Direct contacts between the Frankish and Bulgar rulers are not recorded before 824. It is doubtful whether there were earlier political contacts between these two expanding realms; had there been, they might have occurred in the course of the campaigns against the Avars.[33] Some scholars assume that the Bulgars contributed to the fall of the Avar khaganate, an assumption based mainly on two passages in the Byzantine encyclopaedia, the *Suidae lexicon*.[34] In the first, under the headword *Bulgaroi*, following the destruction of the khaganate, Khan Krum asks the Avar captives why their ruler and people had fallen.[35] The second passage appears in the entry for *Avaroi*.[36] If the Bulgars did participate in the destruction of the Avar khaganate between 803 and 805, it means that contacts between the Franks and Bulgars are quite likely to have occurred before 824. No other sources support this assumption, however; and some scholars consider the *Suidae lexicon* an unreliable source for these events.[37]

Other sources closer to the events of 811, such as the *Chronicle of 811*, claim that the Bulgars hired the Avars then, which could imply that they were on friendly terms, although this is by no means sure.[38] But even if the Avars participated in battle against the Byzantine army in 811, this does not enable us to draw firm conclusions about Bulgaro-Avar relations in the preceding years. We have to accept that there is no serious evidence to support either assumption. It is possible that Bulgars played a role in the fall of the Avar khaganate, but since the sometimes rather dubious *Suidae lexicon* remains our only source, this cannot be securely confirmed.[39]

However, the issue is relevant to the question of contacts between the Franks and Bulgars before the Treaty of Aachen. Such contacts were, after all, quite unlikely. All the information that the Franks seem to have had about conflicts between Nikephoros and the Bulgars, and the battle of 811, was clearly conveyed by the Byzantine ambassadors. As we have seen, the *Annales regni Francorum* refers to the death of Nikephoros 'post multas et insignes victorias in Moesia provincia' and thus tries to downplay the extent of his defeat.[40] The Franks clearly had no other channel for receiving information about the Bulgars than through the Byzantines. This was still true two years later, in 814, when Byzantine envoys dispatched by the new emperor, Leo V, reported the Bulgar Krum's siege of Constantinople. The envoys again clearly mention Nikephoros' defeat in 811 and the expulsion of Michael I from Moesia, glossing over the lost battle of Versinikia and its aftermath, before moving on to the Bulgars and their siege of the imperial city. The envoys emphasize the military success of the new emperor, Leo V, and

claim that Krum had been wounded in a surprise attack, compelling him to retreat to his homeland.[41]

News about the Bulgars only reached the Frankish court independently of the Byzantines in 818. In that year, Emperor Louis the Pious received an embassy from the Timociani, who had split from union with the Bulgars and sought the protection of the Franks.[42] The first direct contact took place in 824, when a Bulgar embassy visited Louis the Pious and suggested a peace treaty. The *Annales* mentions that Louis was surprised by the news and the arrival of Bulgar envoys, who had never visited before.[43] From then on, however, the Franks undertook their own investigations. Louis dispatched a Bavarian called Machelm to accompany the envoys home and learn more about them and their mission.[44]

Before then, the Frankish court had been unable to gather its own information about the Bulgars and depended on whatever Byzantine embassies reported. With this in mind, the Byzantine embassy of 812 deserves special attention. The *Annales regni Francorum* presents events just as the Byzantine envoys would have reported them, emphasizing the emperor's victories and referring to Nikephoros' death as some kind of unhappy accident. It was clearly one of the tasks of the embassy to present the emperor in a position of strength. The former emperor, Nikephoros, is mentioned as the one to whom Charlemagne's embassy had been dispatched and the one who had initiated the peace.[45] This is quite different from the Nikephoros depicted by Theophanes – or whoever was responsible for compiling the chronicle – who describes his deeds with the utmost scorn, even showing a 'pathological hatred of the emperor'.[46] It is also quite different from the Nikephoros of the *Chronicle of 811*, where he is described as being punished for being penurious and miserly in excess. Although, according to the *Chronicle of 811*, Nikephoros destroyed himself and the whole Roman army because of their thoughtlessness and false pretension, he is still presented differently from Theophanes' portrait of him.

In contrast, the Byzantine and Frankish envoys paint a far more positive picture of Nikephoros. The Byzantines were clearly instructed to emphasize the continuity between the emperor who died on the battlefield and his successor, and the Franks who accompanied them made no attempt to change this picture. This suited Michael I, who would not have wanted to lose the favourable position Nikephoros had achieved in previous negotiations.

The Byzantines' diplomacy

Nikephoros' diplomatic endeavours took place after a period of diplomatic silence and military conflict with the Franks over Venetia, Istria and the Dalmatian coast. In 806, the Byzantines had succeeded in occupying Dalmatia with a fleet under the command of the *patrikios* Niketas and in blockading the region of Venice. Pippin, king of Italy, had been obliged to conclude a treaty in 807; but a year later, once it had expired, he prevailed over the Byzantines, occupying a large part of the lagoon and capturing Doge Obelerius. At this point Nikephoros restarted peace negotiations. They began during a period of Byzantine military expansion,

just after Nikephoros had undertaken his first military campaign against the Bulgars in 809.[47]

Diplomatic preparations for this Bulgar campaign might have started even earlier. Contacts with the Frankish empire were embedded in a broader plan to halt conflict with the Franks while concentrating on the subjugation of the Bulgars. Against this backdrop, Nikephoros resumed contact with the Franks in 810, sending the *spatharios* Arsaphios firstly to Charlemagne's son, Pippin, in Italy and, after news of the latter's death, to Charlemagne himself in Aachen.[48] Charlemagne agreed to leave Venetia to the Byzantines and sent a letter and an embassy to Constantinople;[49] the latter included Bishop Haido of Basel, Count Hugo of Tours, the Lombard Aio of Friuli, the *spatharios* Leo and Doge Obelerius of Venice.[50] In the following year, 812, the embassy returned for the final phase of setting up the Treaty of Aachen.

There is no reason to mistrust Theophanes on this: he confirms the sending of an embassy to conclude a peace treaty; terms Charlemagne 'emperor of the Franks' (βασιλεύς τῶν Φράγγων); and in addition mentions plans to arrange a marriage for Michael's son, Theophylact. In contrast, all our Frankish sources are silent about this proposal.[51] These marriage plans have been widely discussed in the scholarship. Apart from some who reject the existence of such a plan altogether, it has mostly been seen as a way of drawing the Franks into the Byzantine hierarchy.[52] This could well have been part of Nikephoros' original plan and would have been completely in line with Byzantine strategy. It would also have been a perfect fit for the precarious political situation of 812.

For the Byzantines, therefore, a peace treaty with the Franks can be regarded as part of a broader, longer-term expansion. But the defeat and death of Nikephoros in 811 changed things for the empire. From then on it was a question of defence rather than expansion. It was this fact that had to be concealed when Emperor Michael received the envoys from Aachen and sent them back again in 812. The mutual exchange of envoys continued after 812. Charlemagne sent a further embassy in 813,[53] and Leo, who became emperor on 12 July 813, sent another one back. As we have seen, under pressure from the Bulgars between 811 and 813, Leo's embassy of 814 presented a different picture from the one in 812; but it still tried to shape the information in the Byzantines' favour, depicting Leo as a hero who had forced Krum to return to his homeland.[54]

Judging by the accounts in our Byzantine sources, the reality was quite different. It was probably during the siege of Constantinople that a meeting with Krum had been arranged in order to sue for peace. A plot to murder Krum during the meeting, using concealed armed men, failed. Krum was only wounded, but his brother-in-law, Constantine Patzikios, was taken captive. This did not have the effect the Byzantines had hoped for. Instead of heading home, the Bulgars plundered and ravaged Thrace and took Adrianople before they departed.[55]

In 813, after another lost battle and a failed siege of Constantinople, the important city of Adrianople finally fell into the hands of the Bulgars.[56] Byzantine historiography and hagiography tell of deported Christians.[57] Some, such as its bishop Manuel, died as martyrs.[58] Although it is difficult to distinguish clearly between

fact and fiction, it has been demonstrated that many inhabitants were deported to areas along the Danube, to the north of the Bulgar realm.[59] The military situation was disastrous when the Byzantine embassy led by the *spatharios* Christopher, Deacon Gregory, Bishop Amalarius of Trier and Abbot Peter of Nonantola arrived in Aachen in 814.

Unlike the Byzantine embassy of 812, the *Annales regni Francorum* presents a condensed but detailed account of Michael I's military defeat and expulsion from Moesia by the Bulgar khan Krum. The *Annales* also mentions how Michael, who became a monk, was deposed and how Leo Bardas acceded to the throne. Special emphasis is placed on the Bulgar siege of Constantinople and the attack led by Emperor Leo himself, in which Krum, who was recklessly riding along the walls, was allegedly wounded and forced to withdraw.[60] The failed assault on Krum and his entourage was, of course, not mentioned. This was Byzantine propaganda spread by the embassy of 814.[61] Despite praising Leo's heroism, the envoys clearly left the Franks in no doubt about the military threat to Constantinople. The *Chronicon Laurissense breve* mentions plainly that the Byzantine envoys asked for help against the Bulgars and other barbarians.[62] There is no reason to doubt this information. It would also fit the dark tone of the *Annales*, which highlights the heavy defeats suffered by the Byzantines.

Comparing the *Annales regni Francorum*'s treatment of the two Byzantine embassies of 812 and 814, it becomes even more striking how heavily the first tried to paint a favourable picture. The *Annales* does mention the expulsion from Moesia, as well as the siege of Constantinople, when describing the second embassy; but these defeats are associated with Michael, whereas the new emperor, Leo, claims responsibility for wounding and expelling the Bulgarian ruler, Krum.[63] While in 812 the Byzantine envoys try simply to stick to what had already been achieved, the embassy of 814 launches a new attempt to gain support. And while the 812 embassy tries to hide the precarious situation after Nikephoros' death, two years later they directly plead for help. However, instead of Charlemagne, the Byzantine embassy finds his son, Louis the Pious, on the throne upon their arrival in 814. Soon afterwards, Krum's death relieved the immediate pressure on Byzantium, although conflict continued until a more durable peace was concluded between Byzantium and the Bulgars in 814, or possibly in the years that followed.[64]

Conclusion

The defeat of the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros I in the Balkan mountains in 811 played an important role in the Treaty of Aachen in 812. However, the sources about the disastrous Bulgarian campaign are biased. Theophanes' extreme hostility towards Nikephoros results in a distorted picture of the events of 811. Another important source, the *Chronicle of 811*, presents a slightly different picture of Nikephoros and blames the emperor's pride for the defeat. Although not necessarily an eyewitness report, it seems quite probable that the *Chronicle of 811* was not composed as a hagiographical work from the outset, but underwent revision at

a later date, as Paul Stephenson and others have suggested. Whether the negative aspects of Nikephoros' character were added as part of this revision may also be queried. As a point of comparison, it is interesting to examine how events were presented from the official Byzantine point of view.

As has been shown, the *Annales regni Francorum* offers us an insight into the ways in which the Byzantines presented their politico-military situation to the Franks. The empire's difficulties had to be concealed from the Frankish court in order to maintain the favourable position Nikephoros had achieved two years earlier, when he offered to make peace from a position of strength. Compared to Theophanes, for example, the short extracts from the *Annales* show a different attitude towards Nikephoros at the Byzantine court in 811–812, stressing the military successes he achieved before his death. The Frankish court, however, had no means of confirming the veracity of the information they received about Byzantino-Bulgar conflicts. The first direct contacts between Bulgars and Franks only started in 824. Bulgar participation in the destruction of the Avar khaganate around 800 is hard to prove, and even if it did occur, it did not result in any Bulgaro-Frankish contacts. Thus, for the events of 811 the Frankish court had no other source than the Byzantine embassy, which was able to convey the official Byzantine view. This served Byzantine interests in the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Aachen, in which the Byzantines did not have to make any serious compromises – apart from having to address Charlemagne as emperor and *basileus* – as opposed to the Franks, who had to concede supremacy over the Adriatic. It is not entirely clear, however, whether the Byzantines attributed as much importance to this ceremonial form of address as did the Franks, and as modern scholars continue to do.

Notes

1 Theoph., 490–93; *CTC*, 672–75 (comm. and trans.); *Chronicle of 811*, 432–41 (text and trans.); 440–89 (comm.); *Scriptor incertus*, 27–33. For modern publications, see Rochow 1991, 298–301; Ziemann 2007, 247–63; *BaB*, 23–32, 184–216.

2 'Niciforus imperator post multas et insignes victorias in Moesia provincia commisso cum Bulgaris proelio moritur; et Michahel gener eius imperator factus legatos domni imperatoris Karoli qui ad Niciforum missi fuerunt, in Constantinopoli suscepit et absolvit. Cum quibus et suos legatos direxit, Michahelem scilicet episcopum et Arsafium atque Theognostum protospatharios, et per eos pacem a Niciforo inceptam confirmavit. Nam Aquisgrani, ubi ad imperatorem venerunt, scriptum pacti ab eo in ecclesia suscipientes more suo, id est Greca lingua, laudes ei dixerunt, imperatorem eum et basileum appellantes. Et revertendo Romam venientes in basilica sancti Petri apostolice eundem pacti seu foederis libellum a Leone papa denuo susceperunt': *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

3 For further information about the participants, see *PmbZ* # 618 (Arsaphios); # 5042 (Michael of Synada); # 8011 (Theognostos).

4 Dujčev, 'Novi zhitiini'; *Chronicle of 811*; *Scriptor incertus*, 9–19; Grégoire 1936a; Browning 1965; Kazhdan and Sherry 1997; Markopoulos 1999; Stephenson 2006; Sophoulis 2010.

5 *CTC*, xliii–c; Brandes 1998; Brandes 2009.

6 *CTC*, lvii.

7 Markopoulos 1999, 259.
8 Grégoire 1936a, 417.
9 Grégoire 1936a.
10 Browning 1965; *Chronicle of 811*, 487.
11 Tomić 1952, 81; Markopoulos 1999, 256.
12 Markopoulos 1999, 258–62.
13 Stephenson 2006.
14 Grégoire 1936b, 422–23; Theoph., 491, lines 26–28; *CTC*, 674; *Chronicle of 811*, lines 76–80, 436–38, 472–73 (comm.); *Scriptor incertus,* 30–31; trans. from Stephenson 2006, 89.
15 *Chronicle of 811*, 436, line 52; *Scriptor incertus*, 30, lines 79–80.
16 *Chronicle of 811*, 434, lines 30–35; *Scriptor incertus,* 28–29; trans. from Stephenson 2006, 88.
17 'Nikephoros tried to convince the Imperial City by means of sworn *sacrae* that he had celebrated the feast of Easter in the court of Kroummos. Wishing to rebuild captured Serdica but fearing the opposition of the host, he suggested to the *strategoi* and officers that they should persuade the rank and file to petition the emperor for the rebuilding': Theoph., 485; *CTC*, 666.
18 Theoph., 490; *CTC*, 672–73.
19 Theoph., 490–91; *CTC*, 673.
20 Theoph., 491, line 17; *CTC*, 673.
21 The distance between Markellai and Pliska was more than 100 kilometres; a journey along this route, and then half way back again, would have been more than 150 kilometres: *CTC*, 676 n. 17; Kirilov 2006, 124–26, 174–79; Ziemann 2007, 260.
22 *BR*, 171, 411 n. 231; *CTC*, 676 n. 12.
23 For a detailed commentary on the passage, see Rochow 1991, 299–300.
24 *Chronicle of 811*, 434; *Scriptor incertus*, 28–29; Stephenson 2006, 88.
25 *Chronicle of 811*, lines 20–27, 432–34; *Scriptor incertus,* 28, lines 30–42; Stephenson 2006, 88: 'Thus after entering Krum's palace, searching for his treasuries, and finding great spoils, he began to distribute them among his army per the troop roster, that is copper [coins] and clothes and various other items. When he opened the storehouses of his [Krum's] wine he distributed it so that everyone could drink his fill. Strolling up the paths of the palace [complex] and walking on the terraces of the houses, he exalted and exclaimed "Behold, God has given me all this, and I want to found here a city that bears my name so that I might be renowned in all succeeding generations"'.
26 *Chronicle of 811*, 432, lines 11–15; *Scriptor incertus*, 27; trans. from Stephenson 2006, 88.
27 *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.
28 *ARF* s.a. 812, 136–37.
29 Theoph., 490, *CTC*, 673.
30 Theoph., 485, lines 13–14; *CTC,* 666.
31 Theoph., 485, lines 14–15; see the commentary by Rochow 1991, 290.
32 *Chronicle of 811*, 434, line 31; *Scriptor incertus*, 28, line 49.
33 *ASM*, 320–23.
34 See, e.g., Fehér 1921, 128–30; Váczy 1972; Sós 1973, 12–13; Angelov *et al*. 1981, 132; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 126–27; Zlatarski 2002, 247–48. For an overview of the literature, see *ASM*, 322 and 465 n. 120.
35 For this passage see above, 84–85: *SL*, vol. 1, 483–84, trans. Kiril Galev <www.stoa.org/sol-entries/beta/423> [last accessed 30 August 2016].
36 'that the Bulgarians thoroughly destroyed the Avars by force': *SL*, vol. 1, 3–4 at 4, line 5–6, trans. Anne Mahoney <www.stoa.org/sol-entries/alpha/18> [last accessed 30 August 2016].
37 Gjuzelev 1966 [1986], 140–43.

38　Gjuzelev 1966 [1986], 141–42; *Chronicle of 811*, 434, line 50; *Scriptor incertus*, 27; Stephenson 2006, 88–89.

39　For further literature, see Baldwin 2006.

40　*ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

41　'At Michahel imperator Bulgaros bello adpetens haud prosperis successibus utitur ac proinde domum reversus deposito diademate monachus efficitur; in cuius locum Leo, Bardae patricii filius, imperator constituitur. Crumas rex Bulgarorum, qui Niciforum imperatorem ante duos annos interfecit et Michahelem de Moesia fugavit, secundis rebus elatus cum exercitu usque ad ipsam Constantinopolim accessit et iuxta portam civitatis castra posuit. Quem moenibus urbi obequitantem Leo imperator eruptione facta incautum excepit et graviter vulneratum fugiendo sibi consulere ac patriam turpiter redire coegit': *ARF* s.a. 813, 139. For the battle of Versinikia, see Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 134–35; Ziemann 2007, 276–78; *BaB*, 237–43.

42　*ARF* s.a. 818, 149; see Gjuzelev 1966 [1986], 145.

43　*ARF* s.a. 824, 165; Gjuzelev 1966 [1986], 147; Ziemann 2007, 312. See also the chapter by Nikolov in this volume.

44　*ARF* s.a. 824, 165.

45　'legatos [. . .] qui ad Niciforum missi fuerunt'; and later, on the new embassy: 'per eos pacem a Niciforo inceptam confirmavit': *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

46　See *CTC*, lviii.

47　*ARF* s.a. 806–809, 120–30; Abel and Simson, *Jahrbücher*, 357–60, 377–78, 394–95, 415–22, 437, 441–45; JD¹, 101–05; Classen 1985, 92–93 with further literature. See also Fried 2013, 563–65.

48　ARF s.a. 810, 811, 132–34; Abel and Simson, *Jahrbücher*, 442–45; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 371; *RKK*, nos 450a, 459; Classen 1985, 93.

49　Charlemagne, *Letter to Nikephoros I*; *RKK*, no. 459.

50　*ARF* s.a. 811, 133; Abel and Simson, *Jahrbücher,* 459–65; *RKK*, no. 459a.

51　ἀπέστειλε δὲ καὶ πρὸς Κάρουλον, βασιλέα τῶν Φράγγων, περὶ εἰρήνης καὶ συναλλαγῆς εἰς Θεοφύλακτον, τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ Νικηφόρος ὁ ἁγιώτατος πατριάρχης ἀπέστειλε συνοδικὰ γράμματα πρὸς Λέοντα τὸν ἁγιώτατον πάπαν Ῥώμης': Theoph., 494, *CTC*, 678; *RKK*, no. 385.

52　Dölger 1953, 306–07; Classen 1985, 94; Rochow 1991, 306.

53　*ARF* s.a. 813, 137; Abel and Simson, *Jahrbücher*, 498–500; *RKK*, nos 476, 476a; Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556.

54　*ARF* s.a. 814, 140–41; Simson, *Jahrbücher*, 30–32.

55　Theoph., 503; *CTC*, 686; *Scriptor incertus,* 51–52. For the events see Beshevliev 1981, 270–71; Angelov *et al*. 1981, 139–40; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 135–37; Ziemann 2007, 279–84; *BaB*, 251–60.

56　Zlatarski 2002, 276–77; Angelov *et al*. 1981, 139–40; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 136–37; Ziemann 2007, 282–84; *BaB*, 257.

57　*Synaxarion of Constantinople*, 414–16; *Menologion of Basil II*, esp. cols 276D–277A; *Menologio di Basilio II*; Dujčev and Follieri, 'Acolutia inedita', esp. 94; Ditten 1993, 72.

58　Ditten 1983, esp. 101.

59　See for example, Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle* ch. 128.2, 210–11.

60　*ARF* s.a. 813, 139.

61　Rochow 1991, 321.

62　'Eo anno placitum suum cum Francis imperator Hludowihus habuit Kalendis Augusti mensis, et legati graecorum auxilium petebant ab eo contra Bulgares et caeteras barbaras gentes': Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 'Chronicon Laurissense', 38.

63　*ARF* s.a. 813, 139.

64　Beshevliev 1981, 276–79; Angelov *et al*. 1981, 147–50; Božilov and Gjuzelev 1999, 144–47; Zlatarski 2002, 299–307; Ziemann 2007, 301–03; *BaB*, 275–86.

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Part III

Circles overlapping in the northern Adriatic

8 Aachen, Venice and archaeology

Sauro Gelichi

A coincidence?

There can be little doubt that there was at least one timely coincidence between the Treaty of Aachen and the birth of Venice. According to our written sources, it was exactly then – in the year 810 – that Agnellus Particiaco (or Partecipazio) became doge and the ducal seat was moved from Metamauco to Rivoalto.[1] This gave geographical stability and dignity to the constellation of small islands that would eventually become the city of Venice. However, this can scarcely be pure coincidence: the Franks' interest in the area had already made itself known, when Charlemagne unsuccessfully tried to conquer or directly control the lagoon.[2] In the period between the eighth and tenth centuries, the Venetian aristocratic elites fluctuated between pro-Byzantine loyalty and recognition of the rising Carolingian power. And it was in this period that the islands of the lagoon (and with them the *civitas rivoaltina*) almost unexpectedly revealed themselves to be an area of economic and commercial interest to the Carolingians.

However, the ways in which a geographical area hitherto virtually absent from historical records suddenly and forcefully emerged were extraordinary and may at first seem baffling.[3] As Michael McCormick rightly points out, the period of Venetian growth probably started quite abruptly and was complete within a few decades.[4] There is no reason to doubt that the evolution of the Venetian lagoon underwent a surprising acceleration in this period. However, it is also undeniable that these processes needed an accommodating environment – a context which afforded the chance to evolve in this way. This chapter offers an analysis, in order better to understand the impact of the Treaty of Aachen on these territories. The evidence employed for this purpose is a very promising set of archaeological sources that have been used in previous scholarship inadequately, if at all.

Although it may seem strange, it is precisely because of the scarcity of written documents that the beginnings of Venice appear nebulous and, consequently, almost mythical. Moreover, archaeological evidence has not been well used to study the history of pre-ducal and ducal Venice. I have endeavoured to explain the reasons for this situation elsewhere and so I will not address the question here.[5] However, in order to explain the types of archaeology used in this field and to understand the historical discourse surrounding them, we must identify at least the main paradigms in which this particular strand of archaeological scholarship has evolved.

Paradigms and archaeological reality

The principal paradigms that have long been at the centre of Venetian archaeologists' attention are 'Romanitas' and 'Byzantineness'. As a matter of fact, these are two different versions of the same stereotypical interpretation. 'Romanitas' is associated with the myth of origins, involving the alleged transfer of the mainland (and therefore Roman) population to the islands at the time of the barbarian invasions. In contrast, 'Byzantineness' is seen as the continuation of a relationship with the Roman past over time, reinforced by both political and economic relations with the Byzantine empire. In recent years these paradigms have quite rightly been revised through various exegeses of our written sources. They have nonetheless decisively affected the interpretation of the archaeological data.[6] Thus, on the one hand, archaeology has moved towards the search for the Roman origins of the settlement, as if the lagoon were already intensively and densely populated, and equipped with what Lech Leciejewicz has called a 'permanent settlement', in the early imperial period. On the other hand, Leciejewicz has also suggested that the lagoon either did not exist at all or was much reduced in that period.[7] By the same token, he has dismissively labelled everything that followed in later periods as 'Byzantine'.

In addition to these two paradigms, there is a third, that of Venice's 'wild origins', which is partially accredited by local eleventh-century chronicle traditions.[8] Alone and isolated, Venice therefore appears as a mix of the old (the Roman and the Byzantine) and the different (self-isolation). This has repercussions for the interpretation of our scarce archaeological artefacts, and this situation has affected our understanding of those artefacts. At the same time, it has resulted in our underestimating indicators – or rather types of contexts – which could help us understand what the Venetian lagoon actually was between the eighth and ninth centuries, and what role it played in the regional and international arenas. Sidestepping these three paradigms, this study analyses the archaeological data *per se* from two main perspectives: the local, including the lagoon and its neighbouring areas; and a wider one, comprising the whole arc of the Adriatic.

The archaeology and history of the lagoon: Periodization

There are three main stages in the history of the Venetian lagoon that offer scope for stimulating archaeological analyses. The first is the initial, developmental phase: the area which we continue to see as having been 'patronized' but not 'inhabited' in Roman times began to form a stable settlement, acquiring its first set of permanent habitations. The second period covers the evolution of this space, characterized by processes of selection, movement and centralization of the habitat.[9] Written sources often describe this second period as being marked by a sort of frenzy, which resulted in the continuous relocation of the seat of ducal power. The third and final period is the one that coincides with the transfer of the ducal seat to Rivoalto, around the beginning of the ninth century.

There seems no doubt that much of the Venetian lagoon underwent active settlement between the late fourth and sixth centuries. In fact, the vast majority of the

archaeological artefacts at our disposal date from this period. The initial stages, where well documented, are always characterized by the implementation of remedial and containment structures, such as fills and waterfronts. Further, artefacts of easier archaeological readability are often associated with the internal structuring of the salt marshes and buildings with residential functions, as in the case of Torcello. While remaining a numerically indistinct settlement in the archaeological records, it is thus indisputable that there was a vested local interest in colonizing a territory that had not been intensively settled before.

The northern end of the lagoon shows more signs of fourth-century settlement, but as archaeological excavations have revealed, settlement may also have occurred in parts of the southern reaches, including the islets around Rivoalto. Although our written sources imply that security was an issue, it appears that colonization was associated with processes of a purely economic and itinerant nature. The first sign of this is the central role these spaces acquired in the lagoon's links with the northern Adriatic, after the imperial headquarters moved to Ravenna in Late Antiquity. This function, which is made explicit in a famous letter of Cassiodorus,[10] is indirectly attested by various types of archaeological artefacts found in almost every area investigated in the lagoon.[11]

Further confirmation of the lagoon's importance as a medium for communication is the decisive role of the town of Altino as a commercial centre which organized trade links between the Adriatic, the surrounding hinterland and the north. We should, at this point, reconsider the city's apparent decline, which is due more to a playing down of the archaeological data because of uncritical acceptance of our written sources, particularly the chronicles, than to any real absence of information on Altino in Late Antiquity.[12] It is true that the town underwent a significant transformation, but this was not enough to damage its role at least up to the seventh century. Thus, the growth of settlements in the northern lagoon in the fourth to sixth centuries should be read as an indication of vitality and related to the opportunities that Altino was able to offer: functions that could no longer be fulfilled by infrastructures nearer to the town were shifted to more suitable settlements in the lagoon.

Between the seventh and eighth centuries the situation evolved and moved towards a process of habitat selection, connected to the phenomenon of centralization. This selection resulted in the abandonment of some settlements (such as San Lorenzo di Ammiana and San Francesco del Deserto) and a boost to others, which eventually emerged as new centres with stable and more systematic structures. These centres also began to gain institutional form, and church leaders showed interest in creating new diocesan seats there. This holds true for Torcello during the seventh century, although the exact date remains uncertain, and for Olivolo, the easternmost island of the archipelago, in the years 774–775.[13]

Archaeology illustrates these developments precisely. Excavations outside the former episcopal church of San Pietro di Castello in Olivolo, for example, indicate that the site was already in use between the fifth and sixth centuries. The rectangular building with masonry foundations was, however, only built in the first half of the seventh century. Findings here include three Byzantine *bullae*, used to seal official documents in the sixth and seventh centuries, and a gold

tremissis of Heraclius. All the material evidence seems to indicate that this island had an important role in public administration long before it was established as an episcopal seat.[14]

If we continue to analyse these processes from the perspective of social and institutional order, it is interesting to note that the first ducal seats remained outside this area and were located on the outer reaches of the lagoon. This means that the separation from the mainland, which would later define the lagoon settlement, had not yet occurred, and the emerging Venetian elite still maintained a strong interest in the control and use of land ownership. Indirect confirmation is found in the *Pactum Lotharii* from 840, in the sections establishing the demarcation between the territories of the kingdom of Italy and Cittanova (also called Cittanova Eracliana or Heraclea): a sort of 'rural pact', as it was once described.[15] Cittanova is the location of the first known ducal seat. Although traditionally dated to the fall of Oderzo to the Lombards in 639 and subsequent flight of its population, the settlement appears to have originated in a rural division dating back to Late Antiquity and which remained unchanged throughout the Middle Ages. In contrast, the channel settlements seem to have had a more commercial function.

Unfortunately, we know nothing about the ducal seat of Metamauco, which was established as early as 740–742 and whose precise location remains uncertain. Even though the island is certainly located in the south of the lagoon, as our sources attest, it cannot be identified with certainty as present-day Malamocco. A direct confirmation of ducal interest in these areas is, however, found in written sources about the estate of the Particiaci ducal family. These lands belonged to the same Agnellus Particiaco and his son Justinian, who donated a chapel and their property in the Dogaletto in the southern lagoon to the monks of San Servolo in 819. The chapel and goods would become home to a large monastery dedicated to Sts Benedict and Hilary, which later became the family's burial place.

The Venetian lagoon of the eighth century is thus a place of both historical and archaeological interest. However, its 'phases' of development seem to have the air of 'almost, but not quite'. In order to clarify these phases and to understand the when and the why, we shall now turn our attention to some other comparable areas.

Outside the lagoon

Written evidence suggests that the little-known settlement of Comacchio, just a few kilometres south from the mouth of the Po, emerged towards the beginning of the eighth century, following the Lombard-Byzantine peace treaty of 680. The text, the so-called 'Capitulary of Liutprand', is a covenant about trade along the Po and its tributaries between an unknown community represented by *homines comaclenses* and the Lombards.[16] The *Comaclenses* were required to pay duties for transporting their goods at a series of stations along these rivers. What was shipped is known partially and indirectly by the type of goods they were required to pay duties for: primarily salt, but also pepper, oil, *garum* and, in some cases, coins.

Historiography has offered different interpretations for this moment in time in northern Italy. Following Ludo Hartmann's lead, several scholars see this period

of the Lombard kingdom as a preparatory phase for the economic boom of the Carolingian and post-Carolingian era.[17] Others, not necessarily in contradiction, lean toward a more restrictive hypothesis: they see the undeniable vitality recorded in our few known written sources as strictly local.[18] From our point of view, two main aspects are of note. The first concerns the size and role of maritime traffic (and, therefore, of trade) in this period; and the second is whether the *Comaclenses* were the only possible participants in this commercial 'fever'.

Archaeological research at the site of Comacchio and a review of artefacts from the Po valley have made it possible to ascribe a broader function to this settlement and to rethink the meaning and the role of the last period of Lombard economic history.[19] From an archaeological angle, it represents a good point of comparison for analysing the history of the Venetian lagoon, since we know how, when and where Comacchio developed, and its size; we also have a good idea about the character of its material culture and economy.[20] Archaeology thus reveals key material indicators of a major 'competitor' to the Venetian lagoon in the Adriatic. But was the archaeological context of the Venetian lagoon so very different?

Although the types of archaeological data at our disposal differ for the two locations, there are certain similarities between them. These include the location itself, the ways in which the settlements developed, their structural characteristics and the types of goods that circulated (notably pottery and amphorae). In essence, archaeology does not seem to rule out the suggestion that the Venetian lagoon and Comacchio participated in an economic 'system', which pivoted on the Po valley between the late seventh and first half of the eighth centuries. The location of the ducal seat of Metamauco supports this supposition: although an island, it was not far from the mouths of the rivers Brenta and Adige, and thus connected to Padua and, indirectly, to the lands of the Lombard kingdom.

This idea of an economic system fits into the paradigm of 'fragmentation' prevalent in modern historiography, which, as in this case, envisages functional systems operating at a micro-economic level. I believe, however, that even within this paradigm the role of Mediterranean trade needs to be reconsidered. We have no direct information about such trading activity, yet our few available written sources speak of spices, *garum* (and possibly even oil), which could only have come from the east. We are now aware of these connections and can trace them using a marker which was thought to have been lost after the seventh century: the amphora. Here, too, Comacchio's situation can shed light on that of the Venetian lagoon, for which only uncertain and fragmentary data is currently available.

Material discovered by the excavations at Villaggio San Francesco and the island's episcopal seat of Comacchio indicates a remarkable amount of globular amphorae. Most importantly, these give us an insight into their varied origin, primarily from the eastern Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea, while, to the best of our knowledge, products from southern Italy seem to have been entirely absent at that time.[21] The presence of these findings is corroborated not merely by the evidence of commercial dealings related to *annona* (tax) in those parts of the Adriatic region still under Byzantine control, but also by hints of the existence of a more complex network and of economic relations functioning outside, or in

any case independently, of that system. Of prime importance in this period is the rise of a type of settlement hitherto unknown in the Adriatic: emporia. What were Venice and Comacchio in the beginning, if not emporia?

Aachen: A history of churches and money

At the beginning of the ninth century, the ducal seat was moved one last time. The choice fell upon a group of Venetian islands which, as we have seen, had already been inhabited as early as the fifth and sixth centuries. The most easterly of these, Olivolo, had by then even become an episcopal seat.

The reasons for the last phase of development and the shift towards Rivoalto are not easy to explain, but they may be more comprehensible when detached from possible 'contingencies' and retraced by means of the archaeological data. If we consider the entire lagoon complex as an organic structure – with various political and economic tensions and population dynamics – all these processes appear to be the consequence of a society and an elite that was gradually growing into a mercantile power. The fleet was by now the largest in the northern Adriatic and as a result could be more strategically positioned. This fleet was the real legacy of the Byzantines and necessitated a quantum leap that the *Comaclenses* were not able to make. Venice needed not simply to serve as a passive haven for maritime traffic, but rather to move freely around and control the Adriatic. The new location also lent itself to protecting the area from possible external interference, especially by the Franks, who, as we have seen, had already made an unsuccessful attempt at conquest. And as Albert Ammerman has demonstrated, the width of the channel was greater than today, thus guaranteeing a more versatile use of the fleet.[22]

The question remains whether the transition of Venice from emporium to town and its emergence as the leading mercantile force in the Adriatic was a rapid process, and if this is perceptible in archaeological terms. I believe this is so, even if it requires reliance upon a different kind of archaeology from that previously in use. In recent years, an archaeologist and a historian have published some extremely interesting data on the origins of Venice and its churches.[23] Yet this information, which comes from a diverse range of written sources, especially chronicles, is both useful and dangerous. This is because the chronology of most accounts is never completely certain, and our archaeological sources can offer little help with this problem. For example, San Lorenzo di Castello, one of our few Venetian churches to be excavated, has no parts dated to before the late tenth century.[24] The excavations around San Pietro di Castello, the first episcopal seat, have not unearthed any information about the church either. So, how can this data be used?

In 2004 a mapping of the churches John the Deacon claims to date from the ninth century, as an indicator of the area then settled, suggested that this area corresponds only in part with the archaeological data for that period.[25] This could mean that John is unreliable, which is possible; or it could mean that the town in the ninth century was larger than has been hitherto assumed. Equally, it could mean that the generally accepted theory of centralized settlements may not apply to Venice in its early years. With all this uncertainty surrounding the question of

dating, I am no longer able to agree with the theory that many of these ecclesiastical foundations can be dated to the eighth century.[26] However, if we accept at face value the number of ninth-century Venetian ecclesiastical foundations, the fact remains that it was incredibly high, with no equivalent in any other comparable centres of the same period and of the same type, such as Comacchio. If this information is considered in light of the fact that from 814 onwards the Venetians (while formally declaring themselves 'Byzantine') issued currency in the name of Louis the Pious, it is clear who had become their chief trading partner – and what markets they intended to serve.[27]

Did this flourishing have immediate repercussions for Venice's neighbouring competitors? I would say not. There is no archaeological evidence to prove the sudden and permanent disappearance of those centres and communities which had participated, alongside the Venetians, in the regional dynamics of the Po and the Adriatic in the eighth century. The sequence of events at ninth-century Comacchio and in late ninth- and tenth-century Villaggio San Francesco shows no trace of any traumatic episode. Nor is there any suggestion that Comacchio's importance as an episcopal seat declined, especially since the church's liturgical furnishings were renewed during the ninth century.[28] Further, there is no suggestion that commercial indicators, such as the presence of 'Otranto-type' amphorae characteristic of the previous century, are scarce or absent. In the ninth century, even Torcello could be defined as a large emporium; and it was opulently rebuilt by its bishop, the son of Doge Pietro II, in the eleventh century. Basically, these rival centres were either incorporated into Venice or allowed to continue trading at the local level, much as Torcello and Comacchio had been doing before their traumatic destruction around the beginning of the tenth century.

In the opening decades of the ninth century something was changing in the dynamics of the economy in the northern Adriatic. It had earlier been a system entirely under the power of the Lombards and the Byzantine empire, an interface between the Byzantine world of the Adriatic and Mediterranean and the Lombards' territories, with Comacchio and the Venetian lagoon as passive intermediaries. This then seems to have transformed into a larger system, primarily serving the interests of the Carolingians. It was at this time that the Venetian elites started to play a more active role, leading to their direct involvement in the Adriatic. As such, the Venetian lagoon was the winner in this hidden competition. Even though the Treaty of Aachen of 812 was not the single cause of this development, it certainly promoted the conditions in which the lagoon could evolve in this way.

Notes

1 JD² II.29, 114–15 and 233 nn. 70–71.
2 Hodges 2000, 59–64.
3 'Una storia senza fonti scritte', that of origins, has been effectively defined by Gasparri 1992.
4 McCormick 2007, 44.
5 Gelichi 2010a; Gelichi 2010b.
6 Gasparri 1997.

 7 Leciejewicz 2002a; Leciejewicz 2002b.
 8 Ortalli 2009, 26.
 9 This situation is clearly traceable in the northern part of the lagoon: Gelichi and Moine 2012.
10 Cassiodorus, *Variae* XII.24.
11 In particular, on the variety and quantity of imported pottery, see Grandi 2007; on the amphorae, see Toniolo 2007.
12 Previous scholarship has tended to focus on Altino's development phases as a Roman city, although more recently, some researchers have attempted to discuss the later archaeological evidence; see Calaon 2006; Possenti 2011, 172–77; and Asolati 2011.
13 The date for the foundation of the church at Torcello varies according to different sources, ranging from the late sixth to the late seventh centuries. According to John the Deacon's *Chronicon Venetum* it was 579 (JD², I.28, 82); but the text of the well-known inscription in the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta gives the date as 639 and attributes this to the Byzantine exarch Isaac. On Olivolo, see Cuscito 2009.
14 Tuzzato 1991. See now Gelichi 2015, 72–78.
15 Gasparri 1992, 7.
16 For an edition of the capitulary, see Hartmann 1904, 123–24.
17 Violante 1952.
18 See, for example, Balzaretti 1996.
19 On Comacchio and its role in the Adriatic, see Gelichi 2008.
20 On the recent excavations in Comacchio and the related results, see Gelichi *et al*. 2012.
21 Negrelli 2012, 401–09.
22 Ammerman 2003.
23 *OEE*, 523–31; Ammerman 2003.
24 De Min 1990.
25 Gelichi 2006.
26 Gelichi 2006, 173, fig. 29; Baudo 2006.
27 *OEE*, 758.
28 Gelichi *et al.* 2011.

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9 Patriarchs as patrons

The attribution of the ciboria in Santa Maria delle Grazie at Grado[*]

Magdalena Skoblar

The eve and the aftermath of the Treaty of Aachen was a turbulent time along the Adriatic coast. This was where the interests of Byzantium and the Carolingian empire clashed head on. The fortunes of Grado in the early ninth century illustrate the unsettled political situation of the time in vivid detail, since it is well documented in the written records. The attention of the historical sources seems to have been gripped by the personality and exploits of Fortunatus (803–*c*. 824), patriarch of Grado.[1] His to-ing and fro-ing between the Franks and Byzantines, in both a geographical and ideological sense, has been recorded in papal letters,[2] Frankish sources,[3] and Venetian records.[4] And, to top it all, Fortunatus' first-person narrative of what he did in and donated to the churches of Grado has been preserved in a document referred to as his 'testament'.[5]

Fortunatus' episcopate was characterized by frequent absences from Grado and sojourns in the territories under Frankish dominion. In 803, he was at Charlemagne's court at Salz; from 806 until 810 or 811 he was at Pula; around 814 or 815 he was in Francia again; in 821 he was in Constantinople; and in 824 or 825 he died in Francia. With such a plethora of information about Fortunatus, it is no wonder that scholars have turned to the primary sources when studying the early medieval monuments of Grado. The majority of objects mentioned by Fortunatus are either expensive fabrics or gold and silver items; yet stone sculptures, whose remains far outnumber the quantity of metalwork preserved in Grado, are underrepresented both in his testament and in other written records.

This chapter focuses on fragments of early medieval ciboria in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie which, although frequently mentioned in the scholarly publications on sculpture in the Upper Adriatic and Dalmatia, have never been thoroughly analysed. I will discuss these fragments as a case study of the problems arising from the speculative attribution of material evidence to information provided by the textual sources, and the consequences this method has had for the scholarship. I will also disentangle how these ciboria ever came to be attributed to Fortunatus and to John II (who was appointed patriarch during Fortunatus' absence), and I will question the distortion of evidence gathered from the primary sources to show that Fortunatus never commissioned a ciborium for Santa Maria delle Grazie. Finally, I will highlight the possibility of a different approach to the written records in question.

Given that the sequence of arguments in the historiography of the ciboria has frequently been affected by the purely visual, that is, stylistic characteristics, it is pertinent
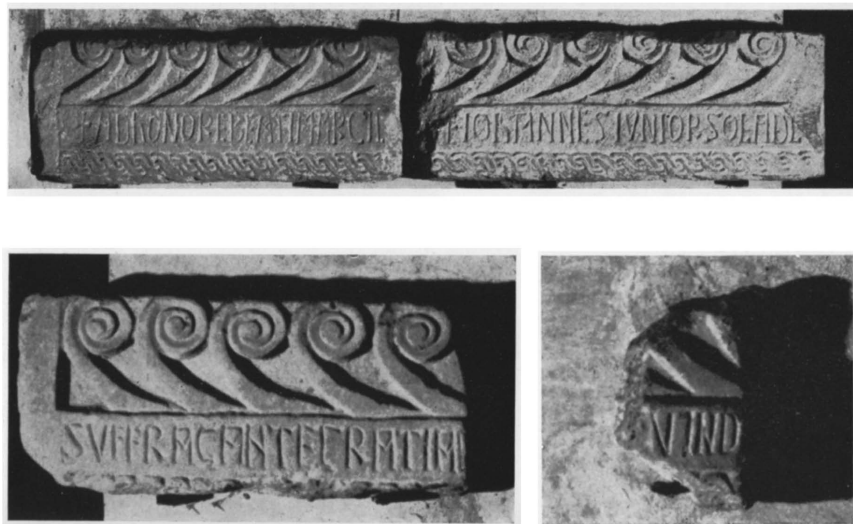
Figure 9.1 Fragments from Patriarch John II's architrave, Lapidario della Basilica di S. Eufemia, Grado (*Corpus*, nos 540–41 [above], 542 [bottom left] and 543 [bottom right]; plate CXCIV)

to begin by looking at a fragmentary architrave from Grado (Fig. 9.1) which may have caused the over-zealous attribution of other sculptures to Fortunatus and John. What sets it apart from other sculptures is the name of its patron, Iohannes Iunior, that is, John II, and the fact that it records the cult of St Mark, predating its counterpart in Venice: +AD HONORE BEATI MARCI [E]/E IOHANNES IVNIOR SOLA D[E] // SVFFRAGANTE GRATIA [D]/[N?] IND.[6] Reconstructions of the text vary somewhat, but scholars agree that it can be read as: 'Ad honore(m) beati Marci E(vangelist) e Iohannes iunior sola De(i)/suffragante gratia d(. . .) ind(ictione)'.[7]

Since the architrave was put up in honour of St Mark by a patron called John II, it has been identified as part of a structure recorded in John the Deacon's *Chronicon Venetum*. This source informs us that John, the patriarch who replaced Fortunatus when he left for Pula in 806, had the chapel of St Mark furnished with marble columns and panels in honour of the martyrs venerated there.[8] This chapel, a small trefoil structure entered through a vestibule, can today be seen reconstructed at the east end of the north aisle of the Cathedral of Santa Eufemia.[9] Apart from relics, it housed the so-called throne of St Mark, a gift which the Byzantine emperor Heraclius sent to Bishop Primogenius in the seventh century. This was also the place of burial of Patriarch John I (d. 802), Fortunatus' predecessor, who was murdered by Maurice II, the son of the Venetian doge John Galbaio.[10]

Fortunatus and his time

The crux of Fortunatus' tempestuous episcopate was the relationship between Grado and its ever-burgeoning neighbour Venice, which reached a nadir in late

802 or early 803 with the murder of Patriarch John I, who had occupied the see of Grado for more than thirty years. John I witnessed the Lombards' rule and felt the impact of their meddling in Istria: he complained to Pope Leo III that the Lombards prevented him from consecrating Istrian bishops who were his canonical suffragans.[11] He therefore welcomed the switchover to the Carolingian administration in 774 and held pro-Frankish political views.[12] The pretext for John's murder was his refusal, in the late 790s, to consecrate a young Greek called Christopher who had been chosen by the Venetian doge John Galbaio as the new bishop of Olivolo.[13] The patriarch's stubbornness prompted the doge's son Maurice II to sail to Grado and throw him to his death from the town's tallest tower.

The murder of the patriarch alarmed local opponents of the Galbaii clan, who fled to Frankish-controlled Treviso in 803. The Venetian exiles elected the tribune Obelerius as the new doge, and upon hearing this, the Galbaii decided to flee: Doge John to Mantua and his son Maurice II to Francia. Their protégé Christopher, now bishop of Olivolo, also fled. The exiled Venetian noblemen were joined in Treviso by the newly appointed patriarch Fortunatus, who proceeded to Salz to see Charlemagne. The emperor reassured him that Istrian bishoprics would remain under his jurisdiction and issued two charters granting him privileges.[14] Fortunatus' gift to Charlemagne was a set of beautifully carved ivory doors.[15] This shows that even at the start of his career, he had access to luxury objects.

At some point during this journey, Fortunatus befriended the aforementioned Bishop Christopher of Olivolo, who had become a supporter of the Frankish cause while in exile. By now it was 804 and Doge Obelerius was in Venice. He continued the practice introduced by the Galbaii of appointing relatives as co-rulers and shared power with his brother Beatus. In the see of Olivolo, left vacant after Christopher's departure, we now find a new bishop, John, who had been a deacon beforehand.[16] When Fortunatus and Christopher returned together from Francia they were not allowed to go to Venice but had to remain at Torcello. This may have been because Obelerius and Beatus were themselves in Francia.[17] Whatever the reason, both the *Chronicon Venetum* and the *Chronicle* of Andrea Dandolo agree that Fortunatus was keen to help Christopher regain his episcopal see. He even captured Bishop John, Christopher's replacement, who managed to get away and report it to Obelerius and Beatus. The conflict was eventually smoothed over, although we do not know how, and both Fortunatus and Christopher returned to their respective sees. The bishops and the doges may have found common ground in the fact that they were all on the same, Frankish, page: unlike the Galbaii, Obelerius had started off with pro-Frankish sympathies, had married a Frankish woman, and hurried to Charlemagne's court with Beatus in 805. Unfortunately for Fortunatus, that page was soon torn: the Byzantines were prompted to act by the switching of Venetian allegiance to the Franks and they sent a fleet, led by the *patrikios* Niketas, into the Adriatic in 806.

At the sight of the Byzantine navy in the Venetian lagoon, the appeal of the Frankish alliance evaporated and Obelerius changed sides: he accepted the Byzantine title of *spatharios* from Niketas. When, in 807, Niketas returned to Constantinople, he was accompanied by Beatus, who paid homage to Emperor Nikephoros and received the title of *hypatos*. Aboard Niketas' ship was also Bishop Christopher, who had been banished from Venice for being a Frankish

supporter. Having scented danger or even seen what happened to his ally, For-
tunatus left for Pula.[18] Obelerius saw his flight as an opportunity to bring back
John, the same cleric who had replaced Christopher as bishop of Olivolo and who
had had to step down in 804 or 805 so that Christopher could return. Obelerius
appointed him as John II, the new patriarch of Grado. He seems to have been held
in high regard by Obelerius since, faced with two vacant sees, Olivolo and Grado,
he chose to give John the senior post instead of the one he had held previously.[19]

The fragile peace that followed the truce agreed in 806 or 807 between Niketas
and Pippin, Charlemagne's son and king of Italy, did not last long and with the
Byzantine navy out of the picture, Pippin renewed his efforts to bring the lagoons
under Frankish control. In 809 he got hold of a significant portion of the Veneto,
and Byzantium reacted by sending another fleet. This one was led by Paul, the
stratēgos of Cephalonia. He did not stay long: peace negotiations were obstructed
by Obelerius and Beatus and no agreement could be reached with Pippin. Realiz-
ing that he had been betrayed by his Venetian allies, Pippin attacked and captured
the city, then moved into Dalmatia, where Paul and his Byzantine fleet put an end
to his advance in 810. Emperor Nikephoros decided to resort to diplomacy and
sent an envoy in the same year to negotiate a peace treaty with the Franks. By
811, Charlemagne's own embassy was accompanying the Byzantine envoy back
to Constantinople, and in their company we find Obelerius who was 'deprived
of his office because of treachery and was ordered to be returned to his lord in
Constantinople'.[20] From this, it is clear that by 810 the ruling Venetian brothers'
skulduggery had lost them the support of both the Franks and the Byzantines.
Obelerius may have been captured by Pippin and taken to Francia while Beatus
escaped to Zadar, where he died in the following year.

The new Venetian doge was Agnellus who had played an active role in the re-
organization of the city, moving the seat of power from Malamocco to Rivoalto,
where his own residence – the first ducal palace on the present-day site – stood.[21]
His reshuffle also affected Grado where he deposed Patriarch John II, Obelerius'
man, at a synod and left the door open for Fortunatus' return. Fortunatus seems to
have been reluctant to come back and set off for Francia, against the wishes of the
Venetians. Displeased, Doge Agnellus replaced him with the abbot of St Servulus
at Venice, also called John.[22] So why did Fortunatus go? His concern must have
been the impact of the Treaty of Aachen: his suffragan bishops in Istria were now
on Frankish territory, as was his rival, the patriarch of Aquileia, while his own see
and the remaining bishoprics were under Byzantine control. Fortunatus may have
gone to argue his case before the new emperor, Louis the Pious. Another reason
for his abrupt trip to Francia may have been the fact that Louis did not honour the
terms of Charlemagne's 'Testament', which assigned two-thirds of his wealth to
the twenty-one metropolitan sees in the empire, one of which was Grado.[23]

Crestfallen, Fortunatus returned to Grado in 815,[24] and it does not come as
a surprise that his loyalty to the Franks started to wane. In 821, he supported
the anti-Frankish revolt in Pannonia and provided the rebel Duke Liudewit with
craftsmen to help fortify his base at Sisak against the Franks.[25] Wanted by the
Franks, Fortunatus escaped to Constantinople in the same year, where he wormed
his way into the entourage of Michael II (820–829). The emperor sent him as one
of his envoys to Louis the Pious in 824, to confirm the Treaty of Aachen. He died

in the same or the following year in Francia on his way to Rome where he was due to explain to the Pope why he had abandoned his see in 821.

Fortunatus' absences make it clear that there were only two periods during which he could have undertaken his lavish projects in Grado: either upon his return from Pula in 810 or 811, or after his trip to Francia in 814 or 815.[26] According to the *Chronicon Venetum*, the chapel of St Mark underwent a radical makeover during the earlier period. Fortunatus furnished it in gold and silver, including an altar for the relics of the martyrs, wall revetments surmounted by silver 'arcus volutiles' and above them 'imagines de auro et de argento'.[27] This would imply that Fortunatus dismantled Patriarch John II's architrave (Fig. 9.1) during his refurbishment.[28]

There is no reason to doubt that this architrave did form part of Patriarch John II's embellishment of the chapel: the strongest argument is its inscription, with the patron's name and the dedication to St Mark. But problems do arise when connections are made between textual sources and material evidence, using weak arguments such as ornament type, carving quality or general appearance, which in the scholarship usually means the presence or absence of classical features.

This is the case with the ciboria fragments from Santa Maria delle Grazie, a church which underwent at least three early Christian building phases, the sixth-century one being the phase still visible in the ninth century.[29] The *Chronicon Venetum* records that, besides refurbishing the chapel of St Mark, Patriarch John II also had a ciborium built above the altar in the church of the Mother of God.[30] The church in question has been identified as Santa Maria delle Grazie. Thus, some of the ciboria remains found there have been attributed to this ciborium commissioned during Patriarch John II's period in office.

The Aurisina stone ciborium attributed to Patriarch John II

The fragments in question correspond to the catalogue numbers 625–629 in Volume 10 of the *Corpus della scultura altomedioevale*, and for clarity I shall refer to them by these numbers. They comprise two near-complete arches (*Corpus* nos 625/626; see Figs 9.2 and 9.3) and three fragments from at least two different arches (*Corpus* nos 627/628/629; see Fig. 9.4), all made from compact grey limestone from the Aurisina quarry near Trieste.[31] The decoration on one arch is clearly different from the others (see Fig. 9.2): in its triangular segments, two birds peck at a stylized plant with heart-shaped ivy leaves,[32] while a tendril with palmettes runs around the arched border which frames the opening. The triangular segments of the other arches are only filled with ivy plants, while the arched borders contain either quadruple-interlace plaits with three-band ribbons (*Corpus* nos 627/628/629, Fig. 9.4) or a triple-interlace plait (as in *Corpus* no. 626, Fig. 9.3). What all these fragments have in common are single-twist plaits found along the upper border and the lateral ends, and ivy leaves in the triangular segments. Furthermore, on top of the two arches sit partially preserved friezes, composed of a double row of chequers surmounted by hooks.

These pieces were found re-used in the church floor. We learn this from Raffaele Cattaneo, who saw them in the late nineteenth century and immediately identified them as the remains of Patriarch John II's altar ciborium as documented

Figure 9.2 Ciborium arch with birds, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Grado (*Corpus*, no. 625; photo © FotoCiol)

Figure 9.3 Ciborium arch with ivy leaves, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Grado (*Corpus*, no. 626; photo © FotoCiol)

in the *Chronicon Venetum*.[33] He considered the decoration 'too superior to the Italian art of the early years' of the ninth century and attributed them to Greek artists on the basis of 'their frankly Byzantine style', while at the same time admitting that they did not 'adequately represent the Byzantine style of the ninth century'.[34]

Two years after Cattaneo, Giuseppe Caprin also observed the remains of the ciborium in the church floor and he quotes Cattaneo's comments that the ciborium is of Byzantine character and not local.[35] This identification, dating and appraisal of the ciborium has gone virtually unchallenged for the past 120 years. In the early twentieth century, Cattaneo's remarks reverberate in the publications of Hans von
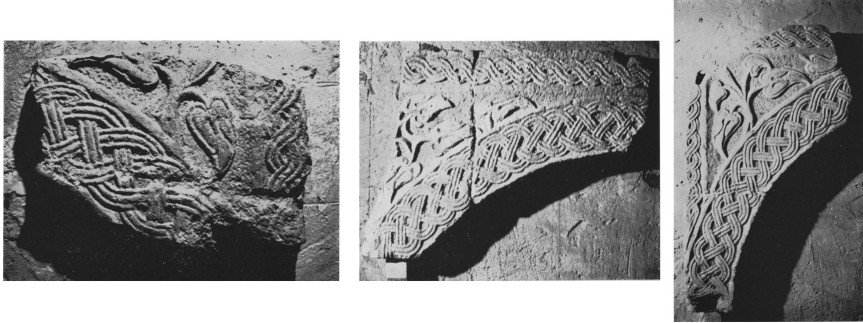
Figure 9.4 Three fragments of ciborium arches featuring ivy leaves and plaits, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Grado (*Corpus*, nos 629 [left], 628 [centre] and 627 [right], plates CCXXIX–CCXXX)

der Gabelentz, who thought the ciborium palmette was of late Roman inspiration,[36] and Arthur Haseloff, who saw the palmette decoration as testimony to an active relationship with Byzantium.[37]

When Italian scholars started writing more frequently about the monuments of Grado after the Second World War, they did not question Cattaneo's assessment of the ciborium's Byzantine style. Paolo Lino Zovatto asserted on more than one occasion that the ciborium had been commissioned by Patriarch John II.[38] In the 1950s, Mario Mirabella Roberti and Giovanni Brusin, in particular, further entrenched the attribution.[39] According to Brusin, the Byzantine style is reflected in the interlaced ribbon in which the central band is wider than the lateral two ('fetuccia bizantina'). Yet at the same time he notes that an identical motif was used in later centuries and in non-Byzantine areas such as Aquileia: it can be found on the so-called panels of Patriarch Maxentius, which some have even considered to be Carolingian.[40] Apart from the interlaced ribbon, Brusin sees evidence of the ciborium's Byzantine character in the plasticity of its forms and overall classical taste. However, unlike Cattaneo, Brusin argues that since the stone used had been quarried at Aurisina, the ciborium must have been made not in Byzantium but in Grado by Greek craftsmen.[41] This has also been widely accepted and can be found in recent scholarship, even though there are no records showing that Patriarch John II ever brought masters to Grado from Byzantium.[42]

Some Croatian scholars have suggested a later date for this ciborium, deeming it eleventh century on the basis of certain stylistic similarities with the so-called ciborium of Proconsul Gregory at Zadar.[43] The first to express this opinion was Ivo Petricioli in the 1970s.[44] The determining factor for the comparison between these two ciboria seems to have been the motif of originally polychrome chequers running along their cornices. Having dated the Zadar ciborium to the eleventh century – because its inscription mentions Proconsul Gregory, a local governor confirmed in the primary sources between 1030 and 1046 – Petricioli suggests the same date for the Grado ciborium.[45] In 2006, Nikola Jakšić corroborated

Petricioli's dating on the basis of the workmanship on details such as the birds' wings and tails, as well as the hooks and chequers on the cornice.[46] Much like Petricioli, he compares the ciborium of Patriarch John II to that of Gregory and to other eleventh-century sculptures from Dalmatia, which Petricioli attributes to the same carving school.[47] However, Jakšić provides further comparisons with reliefs from Pomposa, San Pietro in Vincoli near Ravenna and Osor on the island of Cres.[48] Pavuša Vežić has also classified the Grado ciborium as early Romanesque, believing it not to have been rectangular but rather hexagonal in shape and that it originally stood in a baptistery.[49]

   When Cattaneo and Caprin visited Santa Maria in the late nineteenth century, the church still had its Baroque appearance and eighteenth-century details. The ciboria pieces that they spotted in the floor had probably been re-used during this building phase. A campaign to restore the original, early Christian appearance of the church began in the 1920s, and the local architect and amateur archaeologist Vigilio De Grassi was put in charge of the reconstruction.[50] De Grassi was ruthless towards the Baroque additions. He tore them down and carried out excavations which were methodologically flawed and poorly documented. Monica Cortelletti's work in the archives of the Soprintendenze at Trieste and Gorizia provides valuable insights into this restoration process, including a revised chronology and the publication of photos.[51]

   In 1924 De Grassi started removing the church's pavement, first in the apse and the south aisle, where he discovered early Christian mosaics, then section by section in the nave and the north aisle. No mosaics were found here, since they had been destroyed by medieval tombs,[52] but in 1925 De Grassi was able to extract the arches made of Aurisina stone that Cattaneo and Caprin had spotted, as well as fragments from another ciborium carved from Istrian stone (Fig. 9.5).[53] De Grassi had all the ciborium fragments mounted on the north wall, where they are still displayed.

Figure 9.5 Fragments from the Istrian stone arch, attributed to Patriarch Fortunatus' ciborium and assembled by De Grassi, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Grado (*Corpus*, no. 624; photo © FotoCiol)

The Istrian stone ciborium attributed to Patriarch Fortunatus

De Grassi put together three fragments of an arch from the second ciborium (Fig. 9.5), which display uniform decoration consisting of a large stylized scroll and a small ivy tendril. Above this he placed a row of hooks and a fragmentary cornice bearing bits of an inscription which is difficult to reconstruct. The legible portions mention a glorious time and a thrice-blessed individual. While Pietro Rugo and Marina Lavers have reconstructed it as [GLO]RIO(sis) TEMP[O] RIB(us): TER BEATI (interc)ESSION(e) . . . TSE,[54] Tagliaferri's reading – GLORIO.TEMPORIB:TERR? // BOESI? ONT SE – is probably more accurate, because the fragment on which Rugo and Lavers read ESSION, in fact, bears the letters BOESI.[55] However, all attempts to read this inscription have failed to note that the opening line contains a phrase frequently used to refer to the pontificates of early medieval popes such as Hadrian and Paschal I, and that it can be fully reconstructed as 'Gloriosis temporibus ter beatissimi'.[56]

This ciborium arch was first mentioned almost twenty years after its discovery, in the 1940s.[57] Zovatto was the first to publish an illustration and to write about it in more detail, comparing the decoration to chancel screens from the cathedral at Aquileia and to reliefs in the baptistery at Concordia, assumed to be from the ninth century. He considers the inscription to be of the same date and concludes that they both bear the hallmark of the Carolingian Renaissance.[58] In 1958 Brusin concurred and attributed this arch to Patriarch Fortunatus;[59] as noted, his attribution has been widely accepted in the scholarly literature.[60]

Sergio Tavano argues that the 'dryness of ornament' points to western, more precisely, to Frankish workshops, invited by Fortunatus to Grado.[61] Carlo Gaberscek embraces this assumption and has argued on more than one occasion that this ciborium was carved by craftsmen from Francia – 'magistros de Francia' – whom Fortunatus brought to Grado, as we learn from his testament.[62] However, Gaberscek believes that the craftsmen may have come from Friuli, which was part of the Frankish empire, and that other stylistically similar reliefs at Grado were commissioned by Fortunatus as well.[63] Tagliaferri also notes the purely geometric nature of the ornament but points out that attribution cannot depend solely on the Frankish or Byzantine sympathies of the two patriarchs.[64]

Re-assessment of the attributions of the two ciboria

To attribute the Istrian stone ciborium arch with 'Carolingian-style' decoration to Patriarch Fortunatus is to give the early-ninth-century rivalry between pro-Frankish and Byzantine factions an expression in stone. And so this ciborium has come to be associated with Fortunatus because of his pro-Frankish sympathies and because he brought 'magistros de Francia' to Grado. There has also been an assumption that if John II commissioned a ciborium in 'Byzantine style', the 'Carolingian-style' ciborium must have been commissioned by Fortunatus. However, this reasoning is supported neither by the written sources nor by the material evidence and rests on stylistic analysis alone.

When challenging these attributions, we should firstly note that in his much-quoted testament, Fortunatus makes no mention of any ciborium as part of his remodelling of Santa Maria delle Grazie. He boasts that he had an altar made in this church and provided it with three liturgical cloths, one of damask and two interwoven with golden thread (*fundato* and *fundatum*). He also records that he provided the church with a new roof, made of lead that he had received as a gift from the Carolingian emperor, and that he paved the church and its atrium all the way to the public square in front.[65] Nor is the assumption that masters from Francia carved this ciborium supported by Fortunatus' testament. The masters from Francia are not mentioned in connection with Santa Maria but only towards the end of the testament, when Fortunatus reports how he renovated the ruined church of San Giovanni Maggiore with their help.[66] Furthermore, there is no evidence that the masters in question were carvers, and Wladimiro Dorigo has even argued that they were carpenters from the Alpine region.[67]

Thus, given that Fortunatus makes no reference whatsoever to a ciborium in Santa Maria, let alone to having installed one himself, the identification of the Istrian stone ciborium with Fortunatus should be rejected. He may well have thought Patriarch John II's ciborium perfectly fit for purpose and left it untouched.

When discussing the fragments of the Istrian stone ciborium, Lavers notes that we cannot be sure that all the fragments re-used in the pavement of Santa Maria came from the church originally. Since Santa Maria is close to the cathedral and its baptistery, it is possible that the spolia may have come from there instead. Lavers does not take this reservation further and ends up supporting the traditional view of the two ciboria and their patrons.[68] But if we look at the material evidence itself, without forcing onto it a set narrative inspired by a textual source, there are indications that the so-called ciborium of Patriarch John II may not have been commissioned by him at all.[69]

Although Lavers states that this ciborium of Aurisina stone was rectangular,[70] she does not provide information about any of the pieces' undecorated sides, even when the original ends have been preserved.[71] A closer examination shows that *Corpus* nos 625 and 627 (Figs 9.2 and 9.4) still possess their original ends, which slotted into each other; these ends do not meet at a ninety-degree angle – as they would do on a rectangular ciborium – but rather their sides are slanted. This is consistent with the joining of the sides in a hexagonal ciborium, of a type usually placed over baptismal fonts rather than altars, as Vežić suggests, although without a full explanation of how he arrived at this conclusion.[72]

At this point, it is worth discussing *Corpus* no. 630 (Fig. 9.6), which Lavers attributes to Fortunatus' ciborium because she believes it to be of Istrian stone.[73] Tagliaferri, on the other hand, identifies it as grey compact limestone, a term he also uses for the Aurisina stone of the so-called ciborium of Patriarch John II.[74] Although he comments on this similarity, he dismisses the possibility that the fragment could have formed part of the Aurisina stone ciborium: there would be no space for it on a rectangular ciborium, because the fragment forms part of a fifth arch.[75] However, since a number of the original ends on the ciborium are
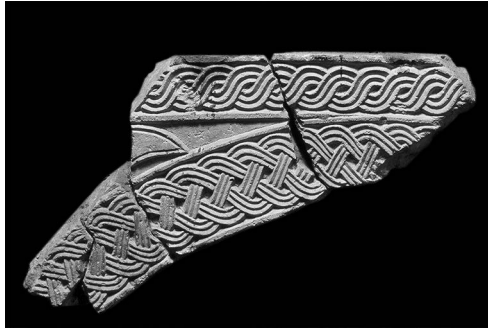
Figure 9.6 Fragment of ciborium arch made of grey compact limestone, Santa Maria delle
       Grazie, Grado (*Corpus*, no. 630; photo © FotoCiol)

slanted, the ciborium must have been hexagonal, as mentioned by Vežić, and this
fragment probably formed the left end of its fifth arch.

   If we accept that Fortunatus is unlikely to have commissioned a ciborium and
that the one of Aurisina stone traditionally ascribed to Patriarch John II is, in fact,
hexagonal and thus more likely to have stood over the font than over the altar, a
question arises: can we identify the ciborium that was set up by Patriarch John
II above the altar of Santa Maria from amongst the stone carvings preserved at
Grado? Although there is no way of knowing which of the fragments in the local
collection formed part of this ciborium, we can assume two things: that it was
rectangular, not hexagonal, and that Fortunatus did not dismantle it. With this
in mind, nothing prevents us from speculating that the ciborium of Istrian stone,
traditionally ascribed to Fortunatus may, in fact, have been commissioned by John
II. The material evidence leaves no doubt that it was rectangular.[76] Moreover, its
inscription referring to a 'glorious time of a three-times blessed' pope seems to
invoke some celebrated event from Grado's past, to which Fortunatus would not
have objected and which may even have appealed to him.

   Equally, if on stylistic grounds we accept the dating of the Aurisina stone cibo-
rium to the eleventh century,[77] this leaves the question of where this ciborium
originally stood. Vežić suggests that this may have been above the font in the
cathedral baptistery.[78] While hexagonal ciboria do feature more frequently in bap-
tisteries than in presbyteries, the main problem with this suggestion is the dis-
crepancy between its dimensions and those of the sixth-century hexagonal font,
which was reconstructed during the restoration works in 1925.[79] The width of the
two best-preserved ciborium arches exceeds the width of the font's sides.[80] While
the arch with the ivy plants (Fig. 9.3) is not significantly larger than the restored
font, the arch with the birds (Fig. 9.2) is more than thirty centimetres wider.[81]
The other option, that the ciborium may have stood on the floor around the font,
a short distance from it, seems unlikely: the width of the arch with the ivy plants
is too small for such an arrangement. A possible solution to the problem might lie

in sidestepping the prevalent opinion that all the fragments made from Aurisina stone belonged to a *single* ciborium and proposing that the wider arch with the birds may have formed part of a different ciborium. It also has to be borne in mind that the eleventh century was a turbulent period for Grado. The city was sacked and plundered by Patriarch Poppo of Aquileia in 1023 and 1042.[82] It is therefore not unfeasible that liturgical furnishings were repaired or re-assembled on at least two occasions during the century. Regardless of which solution we prefer for this ciborium, it is clear that once it has been freed from forced association with the patronage of Patriarch John II, new avenues of inquiry open up.

Conclusion

What emerges from these proposed revisions is that the ciborium made from Aurisina stone cannot be identified as Patriarch John II's commission mentioned in the *Chronicon Venetum*, and that the ciborium made from Istrian limestone is, in fact, not Fortunatus'. These monuments have been misunderstood and misread to fit into a fabricated narrative about feverish building activities on the part of these two patriarchs, who sided with two different political powers. And while time and energy was being spent on expanding these narratives, the textual sources which had inspired them were left mostly unexplored.[83]

The information collated from the *Chronicon Venetum* and Fortunatus' testament paints a different picture of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in the mid-ninth century. As we have seen, Fortunatus furnished it with a new roof made of lead tiles, a luxury in early medieval times, and the lead came as a gift from the Carolingian emperor.[84] Meanwhile, in its interior, the new stone floor glistened all the way from the narthex to the apse, in front of which Fortunatus installed a new altar covered with expensive fabrics. The largest of these, a *fundatum*, enveloped the altar on all sides. Since he describes a similar fabric as white in the same sentence,[85] this *fundatum* must have been of a different colour, most probably red or blue. This is consistent with the altar cloths used in early medieval Rome, which are mentioned in papal donations as 'vestem de fundato' and which came in various colours.[86] Fortunatus' term *fundatum*, therefore, refers to such fabrics, which, in turn, derive their name from the netting pattern embroidered in gold: a fisherman's net is one of the meanings of the substantive adjective *funda*.[87] The second fabric mentioned by Fortunatus is *damaschino*, a material thicker than silk and therefore likely to have covered the altar surface. On top of this would have been placed the aforementioned white fabric, now termed *fundatum*.[88] At the time of writing, this white altar cloth was still being made: Fortunatus states that he has already paid twelve pounds of gold for its gilding – presumably in gold thread – and tries to convince himself that he will live to complete it.[89]

The most conspicuous difference between John II's and Fortunatus' patronage lies in the materials used for the artworks they bought. John II's commission for the chapel of St Mark's was made with 'marmoreis columnis et tabulis', and we can assume that the ciborium he had built above the altar in Santa Maria would

also have been of stone.[90] The reason for this assumption is that, when Fortunatus' building exploits are described in the *Chronicon Venetum*, John the Deacon specifies that he decorated the churches with silver;[91] and it is highly likely that he would have used a similar term for John II's commissions, had they too been made of silver.

Fortunatus' testament confirms that he was more interested in precious metals than in stone. He obsessively lists expensive liturgical fabrics interwoven with gold thread, and even more expensive gold and silver altar fronts, wall claddings, reliquaries and images (taken to be icons).[92] This is hardly surprising, considering that silver furnishings were seen as more prestigious than stone, even marble, and were regarded as the ultimate decorative feature. Chancel screens in the Lateran and Old St Peter's, donated by Constantine the Great, were made of silver,[93] as were the sixth-century liturgical furnishings in Hagia Sophia commissioned by Justinian.[94] After all, one of the reasons why early medieval chancel screens and ciboria were often painted is that they were intended to imitate precious metals and jewels. What follows from this is that Fortunatus had more money or assets at his disposal than John II. This is in line with his 'shifty' character and the concerns of Pope Leo III that Fortunatus would 'pillage Pula's property', as Michael McCormick puts it.[95] Fortunatus also received gifts from Charlemagne: he was made abbot of the monastery of Moyenmoutier and exploited its resources, and was also granted exemption from tax for four ships in Carolingian ports.[96] All this means that he had more money pouring in than John, who only had four years to undertake his commissions.

In addition to this, both the *Chronicon Venetum* and Fortunatus' testament provide us with insights – albeit partial and sometimes vague – into what the ninth-century sanctuaries of Grado may have looked like. We can draw conclusions that significant areas within the church, such as chapels and the altars of martyrs, had their own screens separating them from the rest of the church. There were also more liturgical fabrics than we can imagine: curtains, some even adorned with narrative images, covered doors and hung from the screen architraves, as well as altar cloths, reliquaries and wall revetments. There are elements which require more research, such as the mysterious silver 'arcus volutiles' which Fortunatus mentions in the chapel of St Mark's, and again in the church of Sant'Agata, where their material is not recorded.[97] Lavers interprets them as ciboria while Dorigo argues they were semi-circular arches in the wall.[98] However, Fortunatus may have intended *arcosolia*, given that in both cases he is referring to depositories of famous local relics.

Finally, Fortunatus' testament makes clear that patronage was interconnected with networks and that it depended on who the patrons knew. In his case, his connections stretched from Francia and Istria to Rome and Constantinople and also covered Pannonia and Dalmatia, and we have to open our minds to the possibility that his commissions need not have reflected Carolingian taste alone. Following the Treaty of Aachen and his return to Grado, Fortunatus spared no expense to make his see look modern, resplendent, and equal in beauty to the other patriarchal seats in east and west alike.

Notes

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1 For Fortunatus' biography, see Rando 1997.

2 See Pope Leo III's letter to Charlemagne (dated to *c*. 806–810): Leo III, *Epistolae X*, 94–95.

3 Charlemagne issued two charters granting privileges to Fortunatus: Charlemagne, *Diplomas*, 269–70; *ARF* s.a. 821, 155; s.a. 824, 165; *Annales mettenses priores*, 89–90. Fortunatus was also present at Rižana on the occasion of the plea of the Istrians: see Petranović and Margetić 1983–1984.

4 JD² II.24, 106–07 and 229–30 n. 48; AD, 128.

5 It is also called his *memoratorium* or *commonitorium*: Brunettin 1991, 80–86; Krahwinkler 2005, 72; Dorigo 2006. For the text, see *LPF*, 75–78; Marocco 2001, 27.

6 Tavano 1972; Marocco 2001, 18, 22–25. According to local tradition, firmly established by the second half of the eighth century, St Mark stopped at the Grado lagoons on his way to do missionary work in Aquileia. Because Grado became the seat of the bishop of Aquileia when it was relocated in 557 due to the Lombard threat, the cult of St Mark came to be venerated in Grado. Three years earlier, the bishop of Aquileia assumed the title of patriarch in an act of defiance towards the pope over a theological dispute. To complicate matters even further, after the Lombards captured northern Italy in 568, they proclaimed their own patriarch of Aquileia in 607. This see was also relocated, first to Cormons, in 628 and from there to Cividale in 737; it only returned to Aquileia in 811. The tension between the two sees, both of which saw themselves as legitimate heirs to the old early Christian bishopric and laid claim to jurisdiction over the Istrian dioceses, was finally resolved in 827 at the Synod of Mantua. The patriarch of Aquileia won the argument and was given jurisdiction over Istria, while the power and significance of Grado started to diminish. This was quickly exploited by the Venetians, who, around the same time, stole the body of St Mark from Alexandria and transported it to their lagoon. See also the chapter by Cerno in this volume.

7 Tavano 1972, 206; *Corpus*, 358; Cuscito 1991, 154, fig. 13; Tavano 1996, 384. Sergio Tavano interprets the letter before IND as V, belonging to the fifteenth indiction, and making the year 807. Although Amelio Tagliaferri doubts the letter in question was V, he accepts Tavano's date, while Giuseppe Cuscito reconstructs the letter as N, and this segment of the inscription as the relevant month, *ianuarii* or *iunii*, leaving the exact date open (between 806 and 810).

8 'ante sanctorum martyrum Hermachore et Fortunati, seu Hyllari et Taciani corpora, nec non et sancti Marci capellam marmoreis columnis et tabulis honorifice choros componere studuit': JD², 113; Tavano 1972, 208.

9 The cathedral was built by Bishop Elias in the second half of the sixth century after the transferal of the see from Aquileia to Grado: Bertacchi 1986, 274–89, figs XXIV–XXV; Dorigo 2006, 93 n. 12.

10 Tavano 1996, 283–84.

11 *Epistolae Langobardicae collectae*, nos 19–21, 711–15.

12 See the chapter by Štih in this volume.

13 This bishopric was established only twenty-three years earlier by Doge John's father; see the chapter by Basić in this volume.

14 See above, n. 3.

15 *Annales mettenses priores*, 89–90.

16 According to JD², 108, he was elected by the people. See also AD, 128.

17 Krahwinkler 2005, 69.

18 The letter of Pope Leo III to Charlemagne states that Fortunatus had been forced into exile by the Greeks and the Venetians, see above, n. 2.

19 Olivolo went to Christopher II who, according to Andrea Dandolo, had himself elected on the basis of lies and was ousted after he became possessed by a demon while celebrating mass: AD, 131.

20 *ARF* s.a. 811, 133–34; trans. *CarCh*, 93.

21 See also the chapter by Gelichi in this volume.

22 JD², 116; AD, 140.

23 Louis divided the riches among his family, the Frankish clergy and the pope: Thegan, *Deeds of Louis the Pious*, 188–90. See also Nithard, *History*, 2. For Charlemagne's testament see Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, 88.

24 AD, 142.

25 *ARF* s.a. 821, 155.

26 Dorigo 2006, 90.

27 *LPF*, 75.

28 Tavano 1972, 207; Dorigo 2006, 95.

29 Cortelletti 2004, 197–206; Cortelletti 2005–2006, 102–03.

30 'in sanctae vero Dei genetricis Mariae ecclesia supra altare ciborium peregit': JD², 113.

31 *Corpus*, 403–07. This grey limestone was quarried in Aurisina, some twenty kilometres to the north of Trieste, from the first century BC onwards: D'Ambrosi and Sonzogno 1962; Malacrino 2010, 15; Geositi FVG 2016.

32 *Corpus*, 404.

33 Cattaneo 1896, 284, fig. 138.

34 Cattaneo 1896, 284–85.

35 Caprin 1890, 238, 240.

36 von der Gabelentz 1903, 101.

37 Haseloff 1930, 85.

38 Zovatto 1943–1951, 32–33; Brusin and Zovatto 1957, 444; Zovatto 1971, 72.

39 Roberti 1956, 12; Brusin 1958, 550–52.

40 Brusin 1958, 550–52.

41 Brusin 1958, 550–52.

42 Gaberscek 1973, 22–24; Gaberscek 1974, 72–73; Gaberscek 1977, 90–91; Gaberscek 1980, 382–83; Lavers 1974, 156; Tavano 1976, 31, 180; Tavano 1996, 410; Gioseffi 1977, 44; *Corpus*, 404; Marocco 2001, 26; Cortelletti 2004, 184.

43 Vežić and Lončar 2009, 82–84; Petricioli 1960, 15–18, pl. I.2.

44 Lavers 1974, 160 n. 108.

45 Lavers 1974, 160 n. 108. On Gregory's ciborium, see Vežić and Lončar 2009, 82–84; Petricioli 1960, 15–18. Nikola Jakšić proposed a ninth-century date for one of its arches, on the basis of its stylistic characteristics: Jakšić and Hilje 2008, 127.

46 Jakšić 2006, 22.

47 Jakšić 2006, 21–23.

48 Jakšić 2006, 21.

49 Vežić and Lončar 2009, 63, 136, 156.

50 Cortelletti 2004, 181; Cortelletti 2005–2006, 81, 90–92; Zovatto 1943–1951, 18, 21 n. 1.

51 Cortelletti 2004, 184–94, figs 4–10, 20–21.

52 Cortelletti 2004, 191.

53 Zovatto 1943–1951, 32.

54 Rugo 1975, 38–39, 114, fig. 38; Lavers 1974, 153–56, fig. 7. Lavers also attempts to reconstruct the words from the smaller fragments (including those which went missing after 1965) and which may have belonged to the second architrave. She suggests that they read FET IN[TE](mpor)E BE(ati) and notes the letters [OS] on one of the lost fragments, which also contained two hooks facing away from each other, consistent with a position at the centre of the architrave.

55 *Corpus*, 402–03.

56 Hadrian I's pontificate was used to date a donation of a Lombard duke to the Abbey
     of Farfa *c*. 773–775: *Codice diplomatico Longobardo*, 66–68. See also the inscription
     (*c*. 829) recording the saints which Pope Paschal I deposited in the church of Santa
     Prassede in Rome: Goodson 2010, 167, fig. 36.
57 Kautzsch 1941, 32.
58 Zovatto 1943–1951, 32–33, pl. 25, reiterated in Brusin and Zovatto 1957, 443–44 and
     Zovatto 1971, 72, figs 127–28.
59 Brusin 1958, 553, fig. 140.
60 Gaberscek 1980, 387–88; Lavers 1974, 152–56; Rugo 1975, 38–39; Gioseffi 1977, 44.
61 Tavano 1976, 180–81.
62 Gaberscek 1983, 232.
63 Gaberscek 1980, 391–93.
64 *Corpus*, 403.
65 *LPF*, 76.
66 *LPF*, 77; Dorigo 2006, 90–91.
67 Dorigo 2006, 91.
68 Lavers 1974, 156.
69 This is implied by Petricioli, Jakšić and Vežić (see above, nn. 45, 46, 49).
70 Lavers 1974, 157–58.
71 More surprisingly, this was not done even in the *Corpus*, 405–06.
72 Vežić and Lončar 2009, 63.
73 Lavers 1974, 155–56.
74 *Corpus*, 406.
75 *Corpus*, 406–07.
76 Even Lavers noted that the right fragment has a ninety-degree angle on one of its sides:
     Lavers 1974, 154.
77 See above, nn. 45, 46, 49.
78 See above, n. 49.
79 Tavano 1996, 387–95. See also Polacco 1996.
80 The font has six sides of approximately 150 centimetres in length. When it comes to
     the ciborium arches, fragment no. 625 is 192 centimetres and no. 626 is 158 centime-
     tres long.
81 Lavers also noted the difference in size, but since she considered the ciborium to be
     rectangular, it did not pose a problem: Lavers 1974, 156.
82 Dopsch 1997, 32; de Grassi 1997, 189.
83 The only exception is Dorigo 2006.
84 *LPF*, 76. In 652, Eadbert, the bishop of Lindisfarne, covered the roof of his cathedral
     with lead plates: Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* III.25. In 735, Pope Gregory III did the
     same for the Pantheon, that is, the church of St Mary and all the Martyrs. Cortelletti
     cites Umberto Menicali on the practice of laying lead plates on roofs, showing it was
     very old and used to render them impermeable: Menicali 1992, 250–52.
85 *LPF*, 76.
86 Goodson 2010, 146–47.
87 Rock 1870, liii–lix; Du Cange, *Glossarium*, col. 619. See also Goodson 2010, 280,
     284, 289.
88 *LPF*, 76; both terms refer to the same type of fabric, see Dorigo 2006, 93 n. 11.
89 *LPF*, 76.
90 JD^2, 112.
91 JD^2, 112.
92 *LPF*.
93 Listed in the *Liber pontificalis*, see Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art*, 11–13.
94 In Paul the Silentiary's *Descriptio S. Sophiae* of 563, Paul even commented that Jus-
     tinian 'did not deem a stone adornment sufficient for this divine, immortal temple':
     Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 86, 87–88. See also Xydis 1947.

95 *OEE*, 256.
96 *OEE*, 256.
97 *LPF*, 76, 77.
98 Lavers 1974, 151, 161–62; Dorigo 2006, 92.

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10 Holding the Aquileian patriarchate's title

The key role of local early-ninth-century hagiography

Marianna Cerno

The early ninth century was a crucial period of change for the Aquileian patriarchate. The Treaty of Aachen redefined its boundaries, and animosity with the rival seat of Grado reached a peak. Around the time of the treaty, one of the most important local hagiographical texts gained both a significant prologue and in status, while a second, quite similar text is often seen as being a response to the turbulent political situation. Briefly addressing the historical context of the patriarchate's split and the political demands of the early ninth century, this chapter will offer a different interpretation of the relationship between these two texts, highlighting the distinctive features of the Aquileian hagiographical school and its connections with both the east and the eastern Adriatic and Danubian regions.

The dispute: Three centuries of division

The reorganization of the patriarchate of Aquileia's boundaries at the time of the Treaty of Aachen was triggered mainly by the creation of the new diocese of Salzburg. As a result, Aquileia lost all its territories north of the river Drava.[1] Thus in the early ninth century the Aquileian church needed to reinforce its name and reputation, most of all because of competition from the other patriarchate in the region, Grado, which had come into being in the mid-sixth century. Their long-standing rivalry had started with the Three Chapters, articles of condemnation issued by the emperor Justinian in 544 against three fifth-century theologians, accused of heresy in their lifetime but readmitted to the church by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In response to this condemnation, Aquileia broke with the church of Rome. Justinian's measures were intended to overcome monophysitism, but were interpreted by some dioceses as illegitimate and intolerable imperial interference in matters of religion. These dioceses were Aquileia, Milan, Illyricum, Gaul, Spain and Africa, but Aquileia proved to be the most combative and obstinate. Each became reconciled with Rome in turn, occasionally meeting resistance: Gaul and Spain were the first to return to the fold, while for Illyricum and Africa more coercive measures were used. Northern Italy responded with stronger and more effective ideological opposition, especially in Venetia, where the archbishop was beginning to be referred to by the title of 'patriarch'. This conflict led the pope to declare the assumed patriarchal authority of Aquileia to be void.

Meanwhile, the danger from incursions by the Lombard king Alboin led Paul, bishop of Aquileia, to move to Grado for safety.[2] Grado, a small lagoon town, was an island in the Middle Ages, located at the entrance of the canal leading to Aquileia some six kilometres inland. It almost certainly served as a port for Aquileia, especially after the diversion of the river Natisone, which led to Aquileia's decline as a river port. Grado was also probably the patriarch's summer residence.[3] A few years after moving to Grado, Patriarch Elias ordered a basilica to be built, which was completed in 579. This church was dedicated to St Euphemia, the Chalcedonian martyr who was both a symbol of orthodoxy and the Three Chapters controversy. The transfer eventually became permanent and the schismatic church of Aquileia remained based in Grado, Byzantine territory not yet conquered by the Lombards.[4]

The sixth century ended with insistent calls from Rome for Aquileia – now Grado – to return to orthodoxy. But the Aquileian patriarch, together with the bishops of the Istrian coast, not only prolonged the schism but turned to the emperor Justinian for help in ridding them of the Lombard presence, on the grounds that the Aquileian seat was on Byzantine territory.[5] This thorny diplomatic situation plunged Aquileia-Grado into a long, fruitless period of limbo. For this reason, after Patriarch Severus' death in 606, Candidianus, a bishop supported by the Byzantines who favoured reconciliation with the Roman church, was elected as his successor.

In response, some of the clergy from Aquileia-Grado fled to Lombard territory and took the initiative in electing John as their patriarch.[6] This split the patriarchate definitively: one ecclesiastical centre was now located in Grado, the other in Aquileia, although the latter was moved to Cormons between 617 and 717,[7] then to Cividale del Friuli from 735 to 1236.[8] Grado was supported by Byzantium, while Aquileia, which was now separatist on political rather than theological grounds, was supported by the Lombard kings and the dukes of Friuli.[9]

Although the dispute with Rome was resolved at the end of the seventh century, when the Lombards formally renounced Arianism in 699, the territorial division between the two dioceses remained, and the church of Friuli continued to have two heads until the late twelfth century.[10] Thus, from the seventh century on, the bishoprics of Aquileia and Grado both claimed legitimacy and supremacy over one another, while battling fiercely for jurisdiction over the dioceses of Istria.

Aquileian hagiography's role in the dispute

The *Passio Hermachorae et Fortunati* is one of the most important texts of Aquileian hagiography. Telling the story of Hermagoras, the first bishop of Aquileia, it was written between the late seventh and early eighth century, but had a significant prologue added – the *Legenda Marciana* – around the time of the Treaty of Aachen.[11] It was also around then that the cult of another Aquileian martyr saint, its second bishop Hilary, was revived after a long hiatus, in the form of the *Passio Helari*.[12] Thus scholars have suggested that the *Passio*s of these two Aquileian martyrs gained in importance in the early ninth century.[13]

It has long been recognized that the two texts strongly resemble each other and have several features in common. These include their characters: each *Passio* tells the story of a bishop and his deacon, and they have other characters in common, including informers who provoke a pagan persecutor. Their plots are also highly similar: both begin by introducing the martyr and telling of his fame in Aquileia. But when a new governor arrives, pagan priests prompt him to persecute the martyr, claiming that the saint's Christian faith is a danger to the local people. Arrested at home and put on trial, the martyr rejects the governor's attempts to save him, provoking him instead. After torturing the saint and throwing him back into prison, the governor takes a few days to reflect. Meanwhile, the deacon makes his appearance, managing to visit the bishop in jail. This so aggravates the pagan priests that they once again violently incite the governor before the martyr, still in prison, is murdered under cover of darkness.

A third similarity between the two *Passio*s is the type and order of tortures inflicted on our heroes. First they are flogged;[14] then put on the rack (*eculeus*); next, their backs are raked with iron combs by the governor's men;[15] and finally, the martyrs are inflicted with different kinds of burns. The torture Hilary has to bear is more cruel and savage than that inflicted on Hermagoras.[16] A final similarity between the *Passio*s comes from the phrases or expressions used. These include the pagan informers' exclamations,[17] the governor's desire to dissuade others from Christianity,[18] and the martyr's prayers for outflanking the enemies of Christ.[19]

The entire plot and so many details of the *Passio Helari* seem to be modelled on the text of the *Passio Hermachorae* that sometimes it almost loses narrative coherence. For example, at one point the informer Monofantus is unexpectedly replaced by a multitude of pagan priests, who originally feature in the *Passio Hermachorae*. In the same vein, the archdeacon Tatianus is denounced and captured together with Hilary at the beginning of the *Passio Helari*, only to be denounced for a second time, suggesting that the hagiographer may have been influenced by the *Passio Hermachorae*, in which the deacon Fortunatus only appears at a later point in the story.

All of which has led scholars to see the *Passio Helari* as dependent on the *Passio Hermachorae*, and to suggest that Hermagoras remains the most important character in the Aquileian church, relegating Hilary to the role of his lesser-known successor. And since the *Passio Hermachorae* was more widespread and better known, it is considered to be the model not only for the *Passio Helari*, but also for other texts written in the Aquileian region.[20] Besides Hermagoras' role as *proton episcopus*, the greater importance of his *Passio* is underlined by the addition of the *Legenda Marciana*. In this early-ninth-century prologue, the apostle Peter sends St Mark to Aquileia, where he chooses Hermagoras as the spiritual guide of not only the city but also the entire region.

The *Marciana* addition has political significance. In the original *Passio*, which is set in apostolic times in the reign of Nero, Hermagoras ranks equal to the apostle Peter and thus enjoys eminence of a rather vague kind.[21] In contrast, the *Legenda Marciana* places Aquileia within the 'regular' hierarchy of the Roman

apostolic church by making Hermagoras the choice of St Mark, who has been sent to Aquileia by St Peter. The fact that Aquileia needed to boost its church's prestige and antiquity in an existing *Passio* suggests that at the start of the ninth century, the local church responded to current events by means of hagiography.

Jean-Charles Picard suggests the *Legenda Marciana* had a clear role in local ecclesiastical politics. He sees the *Passio Hermachorae* as written proof of Aquileia's long-standing claims to primacy over Grado, as presented at the Synod of Mantua in 827. Picard's hypothesis is based on the acts of the synod and has been unanimously accepted in scholarship.[22] Building on this, Giorgia Vocino sees the *Passio Helari* as Grado's response after the Synod of Mantua,[23] with Hilary's hagiography as a hasty imitation of the *Passio Hermachorae*, which presented an alternative, equally authoritative bishop for the seat of Grado. In Vocino's reading, not only the plots' similarity, but also the absence of any mention of Hermagoras as Hilary's predecessor, and the Greek elements and style of the *Passio Helari* – given that Grado was in Byzantine territory – can be explained as being Grado's attempt to present an alternative episcopal *vita*, in light of its dispute with Aquileia.[24]

The *Passio Helari*: Grado's political instrument or typical Aquileian hagiography?

Whether the *Passio Helari* was written before or after the Synod of Mantua is important, both for its interpretation and for understanding the hagiographical traditions in which it was conceived. A secure *terminus ante quem* is the mid-ninth century, when our oldest surviving manuscripts were produced.[25] But the fact that Hilary is mentioned in Ado of Vienne's *Martyrologium* suggests that it may have been written earlier. Based on linguistic considerations, I have suggested that it predates the Carolingian era.[26] The first two thirds of the *Passio Helari* derive *ad litteram* from the Latin version of the *Passio Ananiae* (the Illyrian martyr Ananias, *BHL* 397), itself a translation of a little-known and narrowly disseminated early medieval Greek *Passio* (*BHG* 2023).[27] Vocino also notes that the parts of the *Passio Ananiae* which are not used in the *Passio Helari* are to be found in the *Passio Iusti* instead,[28] which dates from the second half of the sixth century.[29]

This literal re-use of models that were either unknown or not widely read in the local area is unsurprising – indeed it is one of the hallmarks of the Aquileian school of hagiography.[30] These texts glorify the church of Aquileia, boasting of its illustrious history from the patristic era onwards and portraying it as one of the most ancient Italian episcopal seats. They stress the apostolic tradition of the Aquileian metropolitanate and also the strength of its ties to its ancient origins. Perhaps because of its patchy history – notably the events leading up to the bishop's move to Grado – the church of Aquileia seems to have formalized its tradition early on, remaining 'ancient' in both hagiographical style and content. Such a strategy satisfied contemporary needs and was achieved through targeted changes which nevertheless preserved the original character of the work as a whole.[31]

A similar phenomenon can be seen in the hagiographical writing of Salona, where the *Passio*s of the two patron saints of Split, Anastasius (*BHL* 414–415) and Domnius (*BHL* 2268–2272), retain a strong connection with ancient times, despite later alterations made for reasons of contemporary ecclesiastical politics. The plot of Domnius' *Passio* echoes that of the *Passio Hermachorae*.[32] Domnius is not only described as being sent to Dalmatia by the apostle Peter, in the same way as St Mark was sent to Aquileia; but they also share the miracle of resurrection, as do other eastern Adriatic *Passio*s.[33]

In Aquileian hagiography, the practice of retaining the narrative fabric of a given model is always accompanied by some reference to new, local texts, which, again, aims to demonstrate the close connection between the ancient Aquileian tradition and the patriarchate's glorious past. The Aquileian school seems to have maintained an unvarying philosophy and procedure in all their *Passio*s, regardless of where they were physically located – whether in Aquileia, Trieste or Cividale – and of what was going on, including times of more or less open conflict with Grado. As if they were consciously adhering to editorial conventions, the works produced by the Aquileian hagiographers are homogenous and full of internal references.[34]

Going back to the original models for the *Passio Helari*, the peculiar split of the *Passio Ananiae* and the sixth-century dating of the *Passio Iusti* give us further clues for dating the *Passio Helari* to a period well before the Synod of Mantua in 827. Its compositional technique follows the same rules as the other Aquileian *Passio*s, and does not appear to be either hasty or inaccurate, *pace* Vocino. Firstly, the author modifies some details of his model, the *Passio Ananiae*, updating Hilary's episcopal office and stressing his pastoral work; and in this, the hagiographer takes his cue from the *Passio Hermachorae*. Nor should we necessarily equate the Greek elements in the *Passio Helari* with direct Byzantine influence. For cultural reasons, the whole of the Aquileian church's literary output, including the *Passio Hermachorae*, tends to be characterized by Greek elements and style. Having a close connection with the east is an important characteristic of Aquileian self-representation. Thanks to its central location in the heart of a multiethnic 'Danubian Mitteleuropa',[35] Aquileia stood at a crossroads. Trade and travel, extending along the Mediterranean coast to Africa, gave Aquileia a special relationship with the east. The city was also in a military borderland, home to Greek speakers and with strong eastern orthodox connections.

The *Passio Ananiae* is not an isolated case. Aquileian *Passio*s show many links with remote regions of Christendom: the links are strong, yet subtle and sometimes hard to spot. The *Passio Donati, Venusti et Hermogenis* is one such example of the substantial re-use and renewal of a Danubian hagiographical text by Aquileian hagiographers.[36] Another sign of connections between Aquileia and the Danube region is the merging of the hagiographies of Anastasia of Sirmium (Pannonia) and Chrysogonus of Aquileia.[37] North African influence is also often detectable in Aquileian *Passio*s. One of the city's most ancient hagiographical texts, the *Passio Felicis et Fortunati*, for example, has the same *incipit* as the *Passio* of another Felix, the martyr of Thibiuca in Africa.[38]

Aquileia's fondness for eastern theological form and manner is well attested and was proudly demonstrated by the local clergy in its ancient ecclesiastical acts.[39] The probable early medieval origins of the *Passio Helari*, its careful composition adhering to Aquileian editorial conventions, and the Aquileian practice of embracing eastern literary traditions all place it in Aquileia rather than Grado. This is further corroborated by the fact that the *Passio* is set in the city of Aquileia itself, without any mention of the rival seat of Grado.

Even if one accepts that the *Passio Helari* was written around 827 to compete with the *Passio Hermachorae*, it seems unlikely that Grado would have let its fate be decided by an inaccurate compilation which does not even mention the city's patriarchal tradition and apostolic origin. Council documents affirm that while Aquileia's representatives brought along the *Passio Hermachorae* to the Synod of Mantua, Grado's only presented an episcopal list without any hagiography to attest their church's position.[40] Another important fact is that the *Passio Helari* switches the *Passio Ananiae* chronologically from the reign of Diocletian to that of Emperor Numerian, a typical and well-attested practice of Aquileian hagiographers.[41] This choice is far from being due to casual or careless editing. It clearly shows that the hagiographer did not believe Hilary to be the successor of Hermagoras, as is recorded in the episcopal list of Grado.

It is justifiable to assume that the aforementioned episcopal list, an official document that was kept in Grado from the city's appointment as the legitimate seat of the Aquileian patriarchate, would have been considered more authoritative than a *Passio*, and particularly one which does not even mention, let alone praise, the church of Grado's past, as is the case with the *Passio Helari*. Most of the Aquileian hagiographies appear to be the result of fervent scribal activity between the fifth and the eighth centuries, when the church had its origins. This hagiographical frenzy took place in a constantly changing culture of claim and counter-claim, and was tightly linked to and shaped by the city's turbulent history and politics. Definitive conclusions are difficult to reach, given the lack of firm evidence. But it is a viable hypothesis that the *Passio Helari* was written before the ninth century, or at least before the Synod of Mantua in 827.

A twin defeat

In an era of ferocious tussles between Aquileia and Grado over their patriarchal claims, Aquileia had on its side the strong tradition of St Hermagoras, the apostolic origins of its episcopal seat, and the memory of its enforced relocation to Grado under threat of Lombard incursions, as attested by Paul the Deacon. In its efforts to represent itself as the successor of the church of Aquileia, Grado could field the authority of neither the first bishop, Hermagoras, nor of St Mark. Although Hilary is to be found in second place in Aquileia's official episcopal list, the *Passio Helari* did not establish itself as an authoritative text, and unlike the *Passio Hermachorae*, its dissemination was limited. Thus, in order to face up to Aquileia at the Synod of Mantua, Grado simply proffered the official episcopal list, presenting itself as guardian of local ecclesiastical tradition.

This situation was certainly not determined by the *Passio Helari*'s rushed and inaccurate nature, lack of originality, or 'inferiority' in comparison with the *Passio Hermachorae*. It seems that local hagiography fulfilled its textual function, but the rest was decided by history. The Synod of Mantua in 827 officially reduced Grado to the status of a small parish: the lagoon city lost its title of archbishopric, and the patriarchate was reunited. However, by that time the patriarchate of Grado had a long-established history that was hard to forget or ignore, and Aquileia's triumph soon proved ephemeral and impracticable. Grado never returned to a subordinate position and continued to be the second seat of the patriarchate, acting as metropolitanate of coastal Venetia.[42] But only two years after the Synod of Mantua, the rising city of Venice entered the scene, signaling the start of a new religious era with such spectacular initiatives as the appropriation of the relics of St Mark.[43] A new conflict was on the horizon: a long-lasting rivalry between Aquileia and Venice for control of the lagoon which would shape the course of local religious history for centuries to come.[44]

Notes

1 The Salzburg diocese included the bishopric of Säben/Bressanone: Paschini 1990, 120–22, 155–59; Tagliaferri 1981, 9.
2 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* II.14, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 81; ed. Capo, 88. See also Paschini 1990, 91.
3 Mor 1972, 299.
4 Paschini 1990, 90–91, 105–06.
5 Justinian's re-conquest brought back Italy and Africa under the empire's control: Fedalto 2004, 643.
6 Paul the Deacon (*Historia Langobardorum* IV.32–33, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 127; ed. Capo, 206–08) tells the story so concisely that the dynamics and chain of events become unclear. For a more detailed account see Paschini 1990, 105–06.
7 Scholars disagree about when the seat moved to Cormons, with opinions ranging between 607 and 628 for the establishment of the seat there, and between 717 and 737 for its end: *FiF*, 78; see also Paschini 1990, 137 and n. 4.
8 Cammarosano 1988, 59. Tavano points out that with the arrival of the Lombards in Friuli in the second half of the sixth century, Cividale became the new regional politico-administrative and military centre, accentuating the decline of Aquileia, which had started after its destruction by Attila in the mid-fifth century: Tavano 1979, 627. Attempts to restore the abandoned seat of Aquileia were unsuccessful: Villa 2003, 478–80.
9 This is inevitably a simplification of a highly complex issue. A concise summary can be found in Golinelli 1989, 272–75. For an in-depth analysis see Fedalto 1999, 108–10; Fedalto 2004, 645–50; Paschini 1990, 85–89.
10 Menis 1992, 153–54; Paschini 1990, 120–22.
11 As shown by Paolo Chiesa, who uses historical data, internal elements in the text and the latest philological acquisitions to prove the point (see *Passio Hermachorae*, ed. Chiesa, *passim*). See also Guy Philippart (2009, 217), whose analysis shows that the manuscript tradition also confirms that the *Passio* predates the *Marciana* addition.
12 Bratož 1999, 197–200; Colombi 2012, 156.
13 Hermagoras and Hilary are the patron saints of Udine and Gorizia, respectively. Bishoprics were created in these towns after the suppression of the patriarchate of Aquileia in 1731.

14 'Haec audiens Sevastus praeses iussit eum [= Hermagoras] extendi et nervis crudis caedi': *Passio Hermachorae*, 180. 'Audiens haec Beronius praeses accensus furore iussit eum nudari et extensum virgis caedi': *Passio Helari*, 313.

15 'Audiens haec praeses iussit eum [= Hermagoras] in eculeo suspendi et pectus eius ungulis radi': *Passio Hermachorae*, 181. 'Praeses autem praecepit magis fortiter caedi eum [. . .] et iussit eum extensum in eculeo ungulis radi, ut patefacta eius interanea viderentur': *Passio Helari*, 314.

16 'Postea praecepit laminas ferreas candentes eius [= of Hermagoras] pectori imprimi et lampadas ardentes eius lateribus applicari': *Passio Hermachorae*, 181. 'Tunc praeses fremens cum ira iussit carbonibus ardentibus ustulari dorsum eius et sal cum aceto ex cellinia aspergi et ex cilicio camelorum plagas eius perfricari': *Passio Helari*, 315. The expression *ex cellinia* is only found in texts from the twelfth century onwards and is not known in earlier medieval Latin examples. While the *Passio Helari*'s model, the *Passio Ananiae*, has *excellenti*, the term *ex cellinia* stems from an error by the Aquileian hagiographer, who took the reference to vinegar dripping from sackcloth (*aceto excellenti ex cilicio*) to vinegar 'brought from the cellar' (*aceto ex cellinia*). For a full discussion of this see *Passio Helari*, 296–97.

17 'Tolle magum, occide maleficum' is said to Sevastus: *Passio Hermachorae*, 187. 'Tolle magum, interfice maleficum' scream the pagan priests to Beronius: *Passio Helari*, 316.

18 'Quod si tu in hac perseveraveris insania, in te correctionem omnium quos ad te adgregasti faciam ut per te discant omnes veneranda numina adorare': *Passio Hermachorae*, 179. 'Non est aequum quod agis, sed iube ut adducatur tuis obtutibus Helarus episcopus Christianorum, ut ipso tormentato universi eius corrigantur exemplo': *Passio Helari*, 306–07.

19 'Te deprecor Pater omnipotentem et filium tuum Iesum Christum [. . .], libera nos a persequentibus nos [. . .], sed da Domine Iesu Christe misericordiam servis tuis, ut confundantur inimici nostri et cognoscant quoniam tu es qui confringes cervices peccatorum': *Passio Hermachorae*, 178. 'Eripe me de inimicis meis Deus meus et ab insurgentibus in me libera me. Eripe me de operantibus iniquitatem et de viris sanguinum salvum me fac': *Passio Helari*, 314 (cf. Psalms 59.2–3). And then 'Domine Deus [. . .], exaudi orationes nostras ad laudem tui nominis, ut confundantur omnes qui adorant sculptilia et qui gloriantur in simulacris suis; ostende omnibus in te credentibus qualis est virtus in qua credimus!': *Passio Helari*, 318.

20 For example the *Passio*s of the Aquileian virgins Euphemia, Dorothea, Thecla and Erasma, or the hagiography of Servulus, martyr of Trieste. The *Passio Hermachorae* also inspired hagiographers in the rest of northern Italy, for example in Milan, and in the eastern Adriatic, especially Istria: Bratož 1999, 84–86.

21 Particularly meaningful in this sense is the exclamation of the pagan informers to the governor: 'Ecce, hic peiorem facit subversionem quam Petrus in Roma! Qualiter Petrum nosti punitum, tolle et interfice magum': *Passio Hermachorae*, 183.

22 Picard 1988, 414–15.

23 Vocino 2010.

24 Vocino 2010, 178.

25 Chiesa 2008.

26 *Passio Helari*, 295–96.

27 Cerno 2007.

28 The *Passio* of Justus of Trieste: Vocino 2010, 370–78.

29 Di Brazzano 1998, 57–73. A new edition of the text by Stefano Di Brazzano, with a detailed historical and literary analysis of the *Passio*, refutes Vocino's dating of the *Passio Iusti* to the ninth century: see *Passio Iusti*.

30 Several Aquileian *vitae* draw on Byzantine works. Examples include the *Passio*s of the Aquileian virgins Eufemia, Dorothea, Tecla and Erasma (from the *Passio* of Barbara of Nicomedia) and the *Lives* of Zeno and Justina (from those of Theophilos and

Dorothea). A more significant, if subtler, borrowing is the description of the arrests of Hermagoras and his deacon Fortunatus, of Hilary and his deacon Tatian, and of the martyrs Felix and Fortunatus – and other martyrs who are abruptly captured at home, caught in the illegal act of worship, as can be found in the *Acta Gallonii* and in the *Passio sancti Felix episcopi Tubizacensis*. Scholars connect such episodes with an early textual dating. For these and further examples, see the two-volume *PMAI*; Colombi 2008a; Bratož 1999. Paolo Tomea has also noticed that the *Passio of Leontius and Carpoforus*, the product of a dependent church of the patriarchate of Aquileia, follows two versions of the well-known *Passio of the Martyrs Cosmas and Damianus*: Tomea 1994, 128.

31 Tomea observes that the hagiographies of Aquileia and Grado are the most conservative and formalized throughout northern Italy: Tomea 1994, 149.

32 On the *Passio Domnionis*, see Cerno 2013. Vadim Prozorov was the first scholar to connect the claims of apostolic origins in the *Passio Domnionis* to those of Hermagoras (with the *Marciana* addition) and Apollinaris of Ravenna: Prozorov 2006, 232.

33 Domnius' miracle is to raise from the dead the son of a noble matron, Febronia. A similar theme can be found in other *Passio*s: for example, Hermagoras heals the noble Gregory's possessed son; Trieste's martyr, Servulus, helps an anonymous person; and Hermogenes saves the governor's daughter in the Aquileian *Passio Donati, Venusti et Hermogenis*. Colombi underlines the common and independent reuse of *Acta Marcelli papae*'s description of the miracle of the deacon Cyriacus in the *Passio*s of both Hermagoras and Hermogenes: Colombi 2008b, 66–67, 92–93 (for the episode's biblical references); for subsequent revisions, see Colombi 2013, 110–17.

34 As recent studies on Aquileian hagiography show, the internal quotes in local *Passio*s are taken above all from the *Passio Felicis et Fortunati*, the *Passio Hermachorae et Fortunati* and the *Passio Iusti*: *PMAI*, *passim*.

35 The definition comes from Cuscito 2008, 63–64.

36 Donatus is the patron saint of Cividale del Friuli, seat of the Aquileian patriarchate from 735 to 1236. The *Passio Donati* draws on the ancient hagiography of Pollio, a Pannonian martyr, and this is explicitly mentioned in the text. Although Donatus should be the protagonist, an enigmatic recurrent figure in Aquileian hagiography, the *lector* Hermogenes, also plays a prominent role. Scholars in Austria, Slovenia and Croatia believe that Hermagoras and Hermogenes are one and the same person, contra Italian scholarship. For an overview of this issue, see Bratož 1999, 68–83.

37 In the later Middle Ages, a further connection between Anastasia and Chrysogonus, and the Cantiani brothers, can be seen. These brothers were saints with an ancient Friulian cult, whose original *Passio*, uniquely among local texts, inspired a sermon by Maximus of Turin. Even without the Cantiani brothers, Anastasia's *Passio* connects the areas of Sirmium, Rome and Aquileia through the figure of Chrysogonus.

38 Chiesa 2004, 133. In this article, Paolo Chiesa lists several examples of hagiographies, including Aquileian ones, which have connections to Africa. The cultural and religious community extends to 'imported' cults such as that of the Egyptian saint Menas, who was worshipped continuously across the whole Adriatic coast in the early Christian era, testifying to a lively interchange with Mediterranean Africa. Another suggestive African element in our Aquileian hagiographies is the role of African sailors. In the *Passio* of Maurus of Parentium, for example, Africans want to take the saint's relics back home, to a place called Castella; and in order to do this they prove that Maurus was himself of African origin: Saxer 1984, 73–75. A similar episode can be found in the *Passio Anastasii*, in its story of an Aquileian cloth-dyer who was martyred in Salona.

39 Biasutti 1977, 222–23.

40 Colombi 2012, 117–19; *Concilium Mantuanum*, 589.

41 Other Aquileian *Passio*s set at the time of Numerian include those of Servulus of Trieste, Maurus of Parentium, Pelagius of Emona, Germanus of Pula, and Maximilianus of Celeia. Their common model seems to be the *Passio* of Chrysanthus and Daria. This

text recurs frequently and seems to have been influential in Aquileian hagiography: Colombi 2013, 100, 103–05, 109, 115. On Emperor Numerian in local hagiographies, see Bratož 1999, 253–59.

42 Carile and Fedalto 1978, 346, 386–88; Cammarosano 1988, 56–59; Paschini 1912, 144–48; Paschini 1911, 14–20.

43 According to Heinz Dopsch, the Venetians stole St Mark's relics because of the decisions of the Synod of Mantua: Dopsch 1997, 15.

44 Patriarch John attempted to reabsorb Grado into the Aquileian patriarchate between the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh. He also rekindled the fight for jurisdiction over the Istrian dioceses, Rovigno and Parenzo in particular. His successor Poppo continued John's ecclesiastical policies from 1027 until his death in 1042: Dopsch 1997, 15, 32–34. However, the patriarchal seat of Grado was never suppressed: Paschini 1990, 204, 210–11, 219–20.

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Part IV

Dalmatia

The land in between

11 Post-Roman Dalmatia

Collapse and regeneration of a complex social system

Danijel Dzino

This chapter will discuss the problems of social collapse and regeneration in post-Roman Dalmatia. As there have been different definitions and different cognitive maps of Dalmatia throughout history, it is important to state straight away that in this chapter 'Dalmatia' corresponds to the territory of late antique Roman Dalmatia, stretching between the southernmost part of the Pannonian plain and the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.[1] In Late Antiquity this region did not include modern Montenegro and south-western Serbia, which were part of the province of Praevalitana. The purpose of this chapter is not so much to provide definite answers to the many questions about the 'Dark Ages' in Dalmatia, but rather to observe the region in this period through evidence indicating social collapse and regeneration. Also, this cannot but be a brief survey of this complex problem, which sorely needs concerted and detailed analysis from different scholarly perspectives.

The term 'collapse' can be defined differently according to context. When applied to human society, it implies social transformation characterized by rapid decentralization and the simplification of social networks and organization, accompanied by cultural and political change.[2] Collapse is never an apocalyptic end of civilization. On the contrary, all those societies which have experienced collapse have maintained varying degrees of continuity with the past.[3] The collapse and recovery of Dalmatia cannot be observed in isolation from the transformation of the Roman world in Late Antiquity and should be viewed within the framework of imperial dynamics in the province. It was undoubtedly a functional part of the imperial system before the seventh-century contraction of the Byzantine empire in south-eastern Europe. After then, as this chapter will argue, post-Roman Dalmatia shows the characteristics of an imperial frontier society, where the imperial powers intervened only sporadically and indirectly. It is now well established that the political and cultural fluidity of imperial frontiers tells us much more about empires – and their expansions and contractions – than does research focused on their centres and the few key players within those centres.[4] World-system analysis can also help clarify Dalmatia's peculiar position. It shifted from being part of a world-system in Late Antiquity to becoming a contact periphery, with low-scale contact between core and periphery, in the seventh and eighth centuries, before integrating into a new, early medieval European world-system in the ninth.[5]

In earlier scholarship, the collapse in Dalmatia was almost unanimously ascribed to a flood of migrating Slavs, who used the withdrawal of imperial forces in the time of Heraclius (610–641) to invade and settle the region.[6] Archaeological interpretations also avoided questioning the supreme authority of our written sources, in particular the stories of the arrival of the Croats and Serbs recorded in the tenth-century Byzantine treatise the *De administrando imperio*.[7] That the population fluctuation in the sixth and seventh centuries had a major impact on the whole of south-eastern Europe is difficult to question. Yet today it looks reasonably clear that the image of a Slav influx into post-Roman Dalmatia is a construct of nineteenth-century Croatian historiography, perpetuated for various political and ideological reasons. The agenda of scholars such as Franjo Rački is clear: they were building a historical biography of the Croatians and South Slavs, responding to similar intellectual projects in nineteenth-century western and central Europe. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to 'wipe out' Antiquity – symbolically at least – to empty Dalmatia of its population and to settle the Slav population in an 'empty house'.[8] If we remove this mindset, the whole idea of mass migrations and settlement in post-Roman Dalmatia hangs on the thin thread of evidence supplied by much later sources, such as the *De administrando*.[9]

Dalmatia has for a long time fallen through the cracks between 'global' research into middle Byzantium and the post-Roman west, and is usually ignored by both.[10] The position of Dalmatia as a zone of interaction between Byzantium, the post-Roman west and the distinctive Pannonian culture of the Second Avar khaganate makes this region unique and important for our understanding of the period between the seventh and ninth centuries.[11] The Dalmatian collapse supplements our knowledge of Byzantine contraction and transformation in this period, enabling us to view this process from the perspective of the imperial periphery and borderlands. It is also an example of a more obvious historical discontinuity in the post-Roman world, in contrast to what happened in Italy and Gaul, but complementing, from a comparative perspective, what happened in Britain. The recovery of complex social systems in Dalmatia in the late eighth century provides us with valuable insights into local social transformations on the periphery of the Carolingian empire-building project, too.[12]

Late antique Dalmatia

Roman Dalmatia is, at its roots, an imperial 'artefact', the product of Roman expansion in the first centuries BC and AD. It was composed of different indigenous communities without any well-defined geographical, political or cultural unity, except along very broad lines. When established, Roman Dalmatia did not have a distinctively peripheral status within the imperial system, either in terms of geography or economic significance. It was an ecologically diverse region, with an uneven distribution of natural resources and settlement. The coast and islands had more urbanized settlement patterns, developed around significant areas of arable land in Ravni Kotari, the Neretva valley and the provincial capital of Salona. The mountainous hinterland consists of two ecological zones – the

wooded north and limestone karst regions, with occasional plains known as *polje*s. This geography made communications between the north and the Pannonian plain very difficult, although the Roman imperial government made serious efforts to develop a road infrastructure. The hinterland played a significant role in the imperial economy as part of the Pannonian-Dalmatian *territoria metallorum*.[13] Settlement there remained dispersed, concentrated around river valleys and Roman roads, without typical urban centres.[14] Instead, clusters of small, connected upland sites developed in the hinterland, which did not usually follow Greco-Roman urban patterns. The economy in the hinterland seems to have been based on mining and agriculture. The latter used the Roman *villa rustica* system throughout the province, although this gradually disappeared from the Dalmatian landscape around 400–450, especially in the northern and central parts of the province. In the coastal regions and islands of the eastern Adriatic, *villa*s survived somewhat later than in the hinterland.[15]

Evidence from fifth- and sixth-century Dalmatia does not show a significant weakening of earlier social, economic or belief structures, nor does the brief period of Ostrogothic rule seem to have had a discernible impact. The position of Dalmatia within imperial structures, however, changes during the fifth century, as it moved from being part of the inner core to the periphery. This was when Pannonia was lost to the empire. Still, there are no specific and convincing signs of economic decline in sixth-century Dalmatia.[16] Evidence for the increasing activity of the Japra mines in the northernmost parts of the province is compelling for this period, given that mining required functioning imperial infrastructures.[17] The disappearance of the *villa* economy in large parts of Dalmatia in the fifth century did not necessarily affect the economy in general. As Chris Wickham points out, the general discontinuation of the *villa* economy in Late Antiquity shows social and cultural change rather than economic collapse.[18] Belief structures even show a significant degree of expansion and entrenchment in this period. Important evidence for this is a clear expansion in the visual symbols of Christianity into the hinterland, where many churches were built in the fifth and sixth centuries. This also shows the significant resources invested by local elites and communities in displaying their status.[19] Of a total of 264 late antique Dalmatian churches outside Salona, Pascale Chevalier locates more than a hundred of them beyond the coastal area and the plains of Ravni Kotari. They are not equally distributed, and the concentration of these churches in the valleys of the rivers Bosna, Lašva, Neretva, Una, Vrbas and the *polje*s of Herzegovina reflects the patterns of late antique habitation.[20] The reports from the Salonitan councils of 530 and 533, sometimes questioned but generally considered authentic, also confirm the establishment of rudimentary ecclesiastical infrastructures in the hinterland and even a need for further expansion.[21]

Dalmatian collapse

Our written narratives note sporadic and localized military actions in Dalmatia. These include the mention of the role of the eastern Adriatic coast in Justinian's

Gothic wars, as well as a report by Procopius about the *Sclavini* over-wintering in Dalmatia in 550/551, after they had been expelled from Epirus by imperial forces. While the late sixth century shows political uncertainties on the borders of Dalmatia – such as the Avar raid and defeat in the north of Dalmatia in 597, and the presence of bands of *Sclavini* in Istria in 599/600 and 610/611 – as far as our written sources are concerned, nothing really important or catastrophic occurred in Dalmatia then. However, these written sources disappear after the last dated letters of Pope Gregory I the Great (590–604) to the Salonitan bishop Maximus. There is also a brief mention of the mission of Abbot Martin, sent by Pope John IV (640–642) to buy off hostages captured in Dalmatia from unidentified 'barbarians' or 'pagans'.[22] Only in later written sources, such as *De administrando*, is it suggested that the settlement of the Croats and Serbs occurred at the time of Emperor Heraclius, while Thomas of Split, the author of the *Historia Salonitana*, describes the capture of Salona by the Slavs. This is not the place to debate these sources. But it is important to understand how their positivist interpretations become untenable, by presenting the local historical memories and ideological narratives that are embedded in these works.[23]

There are many fortifications in Dalmatia from Late Antiquity, the overwhelming majority of them being small. Some date to the fifth and sixth centuries, but most are vaguely and imprecisely labelled as 'late antique'. Frequently located on hilltops, sometimes reusing Iron Age hill forts, most of the fortifications found on the coast and islands were built during Justinian's Gothic wars. The fortifications in the hinterland are usually interpreted as a response to inward migration and external pressures, evidence of an apocalyptic collapse, lack of security and the local population's frantic reaction to barbarian invasion.[24] Yet as with our late antique churches, these fortifications rarely show traces of fire and destruction. Exceptions from the hinterland are rare and include the fortification on Crkvina-Makljenovac near Doboj and the basilicas known as Breza II,[25] Vrba-Borak, Dabravine and Oborci.[26]

If we take barbarian mass invasion out of the picture, we need to find a different explanation for the appearance of these fortifications. The positioning of fortifications in Dalmatia is peculiar. In the north, with the exception of the large fortification of Crkvina-Makljenovac, the only concentrations of fortified places are around the mining district to the north-west and controlling the approach through the valley of the Vrbas.[27] Indeed, the overwhelming majority of fortifications are not found in the north of the province, where they would be expected had there been a constant threat of invasion. Earlier analyses of the archaeological evidence failed to point out that the appearance of fortifications in Dalmatia was also affected by internal changes already under way in the Mediterranean world and the Byzantine empire. Cities were no longer crucial for the imperial economy and political control, being unsustainable and expensive to maintain, and from the sixth century on, the empire increasingly made use of the hinterland as its economic base.[28] The appearance of late antique fortifications in the Dalmatian hinterland, when examined in a wider context, shows little more than a replication

of the pattern of early and middle Byzantine fortified hill-top villages positioned along rivers and main communications routes.[29] We can also see that this redefined urbanism, traceable from the third century on in south-eastern Europe, fits perfectly with the settlement pattern of the Dalmatian hinterland in Roman times and can probably explain how this wider region operated within an imperial system in the fifth and sixth centuries.[30]

Florin Curta has challenged the notion of fortified villages in the central and eastern Balkans, arguing that they were forts mostly inhabited by soldiers rather than villages inhabited by local peasants.[31] There is no room here to engage with this argument, which may well be valid for the eastern and central Balkans, the major European thoroughfare towards Constantinople and the Aegean. However, it should be noted that, apart from a few northern fortifications such as Crkvina-Makljenovac or those positioned around the Japra mines, it is difficult to see a reason for stationing soldiers in the Dalmatian hinterland.

Although insufficient and incomplete, especially outside the coastal region and its immediate hinterland, our archaeological records do indicate depopulation, but do not provide evidence for significant external settlement in the seventh century.[32] This is not to say that there was no settlement at all or that settlement did not occur in neighbouring regions like Istria.[33] But there is no evidence of social and cultural change brought about by a large external group, nor evidence of destruction datable to the seventh century. There were no apparent reasons for the Avar and Slav raids to target Dalmatia – in the same way as there were no reasons for the Huns to raid it in the fifth century. There were no cities to sack for blackmail or ransom, no significant amounts of arable land and no economic or social benefits. We should bear in mind that what historians call the First Avar khaganate was a 'shadow empire': a decentralized steppe empire which existed and fed on Byzantine imperial structures.[34]

The Avar empire matches other examples of decentralized steppe empires, whose stability depended on extorting tribute from primary imperial formations.[35] It is telling that the contraction of the Byzantine empire in the seventh century corresponded with the collapse of the First Avar khaganate after the failed siege of Constantinople in 626. While imperial forces were stationed in Dalmatia, there were resources to plunder and thus reasons to raid – as can be seen from the Avar raid of 597 mentioned by Theophylact Simocatta – but the withdrawal of imperial structures removed these reasons. And the terrain gave significant advantage to the defenders: the hinterland could only be conquered by either superior numbers or sophisticated military engines.

Nevertheless traces of collapse, as defined above (155), are clear, and various regional patterns of collapse are also discernible. Collapse is most conspicuous in coastal cities such as Salona, Narona and Epidaurus, which ceased to exist as urban units in the seventh century. Based on the *De administrando* and Thomas of Split, earlier scholarship believed that Salona was sacked by invading Slavs and Avars sometime between 614 and 639. However, this has now been questioned, given our lack of archaeological evidence to support such a sacking of the city.

The depopulation of Salona is seen instead as due to abandonment, perhaps within a few generations, as Neven Budak has argued. Some habitation may have continued, as it did in Narona, but the settlement focus moved permanently to Diocletian's Palace (some five kilometres from the city centre), which then became the core of urban medieval Split (Spalatum).[36]

The abandonment of Salona is sound evidence for a Dalmatian collapse. However, the process of urban development in late antique Salona, apart from the Christianization of urban spaces and burials, remains unclear. No residential buildings from this late period have been found within the walls except for a few dwellings belonging to the urban elite.[37] This might reflect the excavators' continued focus on churches, tombs and city walls. But from what we can see at the moment, it was only the church that was able to mobilize and channel sufficient resources to achieve radical transformation in the urban landscape of late antique Salona. Yet this new urban landscape required maintenance, which was only possible if provincial social structures and belief networks (i.e. Christianity) functioned properly. The seventh-century Byzantine imperial contraction deprived Salona and other urban centres on the Dalmatian coast of their function as provincial administrative and ecclesiastical centres, and inevitably their economies and social structures shrank to the point of bare survival. It is clear that from the seventh century on, the Salonitans did not have sufficient resources to maintain urban living; they had to find other, more affordable solutions and to cut their coat according to their cloth, which meant settling in Diocletian's Palace or dispersing to the rural hinterland.

By the seventh and eighth centuries urban life on the coast and islands had taken on unique, varied settlement forms, which can scarcely be called urban, as can be seen in Zadar.[38] These settlements often combined a rural character with some urban functions, falling into the category of middle-Byzantine 'rural towns'.[39] These rural towns on the coast and islands were administered by local elites, but that they belonged to wider imperial structures is indisputable. The eastern Adriatic maritime façade changed only as much as the rest of the empire changed. Examination of material evidence from modern-day Albania and Greek Epirus shows the same dispersed pattern of small, interconnected settlements, combining a rural character with some urban functions; and after around 640, most early Byzantine urban units were abandoned and displaced to such rural towns. A very similar picture is recorded in the ports of the western Adriatic, too.[40]

Mapping the collapse in the hinterland is more difficult: as social structures were far less complex and perceptible than on the coast, the collapse possibly had less effect here. Different communities certainly experienced it differently. We know for certain that production in the Japra mines ceased in the early seventh century, as did the building of new churches. Although churches probably remained in use for an undetermined time after then, the display of social status through building projects was no longer a priority in the Dalmatian hinterland in this period.[41] The most visible change in the material culture is the appearance of row-grave cemeteries (for example, at Mihaljevići-Sarajevo, Njive-Narona, Kašić-Glavčurak, Greblje-Knin and Korita-Tomislavgrad) and burials in Iron Age

tumuli (at Matakova Glavica-Krneza and Škornica-Privlaka), with an increasing frequency of grave assemblages. Grave goods started to appear even in purely Christian settings, such as vault-tombs; these have been found at Oborci, Kijevo-Vrlika, Lučane and Munivrane-Gala near Sinj, and at Šamatorije-Gorica (near Imotski), Varvara-Prozor, Dželilovac-Travnik and Vrba-Glamoč. This type of burial custom continued into the seventh and early to mid-eighth centuries, with a stylistic change in the artefacts found in the grave-assemblages from 'Ostrogothic' to 'Slav'.[42]

So what was the reason for the collapse? We should seriously question that it was triggered by a 'barbarian' invasion of Slavs or Avars. Not only are our contemporary sources uncertain, but also, in comparative perspective, 'barbarians' are very rarely the main cause of social collapse in human history.[43] Various factors certainly combined to contribute to the contraction of the Byzantine empire, such as the Justinianic plague, the climate changes of the sixth century, as well as Heraclius' Persian wars and Avar pressure from the north in the early seventh century.[44] This 'perfect storm' of troubles certainly affected existing social networks and hastened the transformation already under way, from late antique landed elites to a less hierarchical society dominated by individuals who drew their power from informal personal influences and wealth, rather than through birthright.[45]

Dalmatia after the collapse

After *c*. 620–630, the Dalmatian hinterland changed from being a part of the empire into a fluid imperial frontier. It was expensive and unnecessary – perhaps also impossible – for the empire to invest further resources in preserving full military and administrative control. Armed forces and civil administration were withdrawn, maintaining a bare minimum of control points to secure sea links with imperial possessions in Istria and Ravenna. These points of control, Byzantine 'Bunkers' and 'Open Cities' to use Jonathan Shepard's expression, protected communication lines, but also formed interactive frontier zones with the communities surrounding them.[46] As there is no indication of any Byzantine fleet stationed permanently in the eastern Adriatic and there is also a lack of copper coinage indicating regular payments to sailors, it is reasonable to assume that there was no apparent threat to the region's communications with Istria and Ravenna in the seventh and early eighth centuries.[47] The operations of Constans II against the Lombards in Italy in 663, or the even more punitive action of Justinian II against Ravenna in 709, could not even have been considered without the imperial fleet's ability to control sailing routes along the eastern Adriatic coast.[48]

However, forging links with tradition and historical memories from antiquity remained important in developing the identities of these eastern Adriatic coastal settlements. It is not surprising that by the mid-tenth century, their inhabitants had established and maintained their own 'Roman' identity. The eastern Adriatic coast and islands by then belonged fully to their inhabitants, local communities and elites. Paradoxically, most of these communities needed to maintain links with Byzantium, the only 'rightful' successor to the Roman empire, in order to justify

their claims to the past in their newly formed discourses of identity. The eastern Adriatic was very much part of the Byzantine world in the seventh and eighth centuries, not because its inhabitants were forced to be so, but because their elites needed it to vindicate their position.[49]

Moving towards the hinterland of Dalmatia, we see the emergence of different settlement and social patterns. In the hinterland of Zadar and Salona-Split, which has been researched in the most detail, a number of dispersed but interconnected communities can be detected, mostly from the evidence of 'Old Croat' cemeteries. However, such cemeteries are found throughout the central Dalmatian coast, the Neretva valley, the karst zone in the *polje*s of Duvno (Tomislavgrad), Livno, Sinj and even deeper in the hinterland. They have traditionally been ascribed in Croatian archaeology to migrating pagan Slavs or Croats, who had transformed their burial customs from ancestral cremation in the seventh century to inhumation burials with grave goods by the eighth century.[50]

This view has been discussed and challenged elsewhere and will be summarized only briefly here.[51] Dalmatian society between the seventh and ninth centuries is substantially different from the societies before and after it. While late antique social structures started to change in the sixth century, no change is traceable in the material evidence until the seventh century. The appearance of grave goods and changes in burial rites reflect social changes and the existence of a society in which local elites needed to present their status to their communities in different ways. One of these was burial: the presentation of the assemblage of grave goods for the funeral, the choice of grave architecture and the choice of funeral rite were all signifiers of the deceased's social status, religion and ethnicity. There is no decisive evidence for de-Christianization, in the same way that we cannot find evidence for the maintenance of Christianity or an ecclesiastical infrastructure.[52] Paganism in Dalmatia is best described as a lack of organized and ideologically defined Christianity, rather than as its disappearance. Even the immigrant population, usually referred to as Slavs, had for at least a few generations before their arrival in Dalmatia been exposed to the influence of Christianity, and it would be surprising if they had not incorporated it in their folk beliefs.

Row-grave cemeteries in Dalmatia present a wider context for the fragmentation and rebuilding of society in the post-Roman world. They also indicate poverty and falling living standards, shown in the simplicity of the funerary customs. It is unfortunate that for now, we have at our disposal material mostly from the coastal area and its immediate hinterland, leaving the Dinaric Alps unexplored. However, evidence from the seventh and most of the eighth centuries shows an overall similarity in how individual communities in Ravni Kotari and the Cetina valley approached the burial of their dead. Below the surface of a shared cultural *habitus*, the heterogeneity of different aspects of burial rites and the deposition of the dead reveals signs of complex sociological, regional, political and ethnic fragmentation in this period. When compared with other row-grave cemeteries in Europe, ours show specific patterns, reflecting the identity and popular culture of the rural population in the Dalmatian hinterland. The composition of grave goods became more complex in the late eighth century, coinciding with Carolingian expansion in the region. The complexity of grave goods offered a new and

efficient means of identifying with the elite, and a rise of hereditary elites is highly likely to have taken place during this period.[53]

Recovery

Traces of recovery become visible towards the end of the eighth century. The landscape of power changed significantly outside Dalmatia. On one side, Charlemagne's empire building extended Carolingian control across central Europe and Istria; on the other, the Byzantines showed their intention of consolidating their losses in Italy and preserving their Adriatic possessions. The conflict between these two powers – or rather, two imperial projects – in the Adriatic is thus not surprising. Early-ninth-century Byzantine imperial ambitions in the northern Adriatic cities can be seen from such symbolic gestures as the return of saints' relics and church building in Zadar.[54] And the establishment of a Dalmatian duchy as a Frankish *limes* shows clearly the role this region played in Carolingian imperial projects. Both were unsuccessful in the long run, but the increased political dynamics visibly re-animated this region as a new imperial frontier in the ninth century. The Treaty of Aachen can be regarded as symbolic confirmation of this recovery. The outcome was the division and redefinition of imperial spaces and zones of interest in post-Roman Dalmatia. This new imperial dynamic resulted in increased social complexity amongst local elites, creating more elaborate political units at this time.[55]

The material evidence for recovery can already be seen by the later eighth and early ninth centuries, especially in Old Croat cemeteries near the coast. Grave-good assemblages become more complex, while imported horse gear and swords show newly forged social identities and the ways in which they were expressed.[56] The collapse of the Second Avar khaganate at this time sparked new population movements across the Pannonian plain, and it is not impossible that some groups were settled in Dalmatia under the auspices of the Carolingians.[57] Carolingian Christianity started to engage with the region through intensive church building and the spread of Carolingian belief systems, which helped to legitimize the power of indigenous elites. It is questionable whether Christianity had ever disappeared from the hinterland. Just as the nineteenth-century nation builders needed to depopulate late antique Dalmatia in order to repopulate it through massive Slav settlement, they also needed to wipe out Christianity in the Dalmatian hinterland so that the settled Croats and Serbs could be baptized, as recounted in the stories of the *De administrando*.[58] Only once western Christianity was integrated within the new imperial structures of the Carolingian world was it possible to establish a new orthodoxy and reclaim Christianity over those communities which still lived in micro-Christendoms[59] – in other words, to 'baptize' them.

Conclusion

The collapse of complex social systems in post-Roman Dalmatia fits well into a description of 'collapse' as the simplification of complex social structures. Dalmatian society became de-stratified, simpler, and the exchange of information and

trade decreased. It does not seem that the collapse was brought about exclusively by outside factors, like migration or conquest by a foreign group, as has usually been assumed in scholarship. Instead it was the result of long-lasting internal developments and transformations. In fact, the Dalmatian hinterland successfully survived the instability of the fifth and sixth centuries, thanks to the self-sustainability of its dispersed settlement pattern and to the part of the imperial system that continued to function into the early seventh century. Then the Byzantine empire could no longer justify keeping the whole of Dalmatia within its imperial system. The costs far outweighed the gains during the crisis faced by the empire under Heraclius. Particular ecological and geographical features in Dalmatia minimized threats against imperial interests in the Adriatic; unlike the Morava valley in modern-day Serbia, the region was not suitable as a communication route for the fast transport of troops from Avar-dominated Pannonia. The collapse of post-Roman Dalmatia can therefore be described as a change in imperial dynamics, shifting this region from imperial periphery to imperial frontier. This shift caused significant fluidity and simplification in social structures, as it did in these frontier-zone communities' identities – some opted to re-imagine links with the past, while others completely transformed their frames of reference.

In all the aspects discussed – political, social, economic and ideological – the recovery of complex social systems can be seen in both the material evidence and in our written records from the ninth century on. Unlike the preceding collapse, the recovery was caused by external factors. The renewed imperial dynamics in the frontier zone were the result of two imperial projects – Carolingian and Byzantine – causing the formation of secondary political units in the Dalmatian frontier zone, and more social competition and complexity. Ideological and economic systems were re-established as a consequence of this political and social transformation. Roman and post-Roman Dalmatia, a unique region marked by its geographical, cultural and ecological peculiarities, is a good example of regional collapse and the recovery of complex social systems. Since many important questions remain unanswered, it is also an exciting field for future research.

Notes

1 Administratively, there were probably two provinces – Dalmatia and Liburnia: Matijašić 2012, 176–77; Basić 2017.
2 Tainter 1988; Yofree and Cowgill 1988.
3 Schwartz and Nichols 2006; McAnany and Yoffee 2009.
4 On the dynamics of imperial frontier societies, see Meier 2006, 78–111; Colás 2007, 47–62; Münkler 2007, 8, 27–28; Ludden 2011, 135–36; and in earlier scholarship, Robinson 1972.
5 Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Hall 2000.
6 Major narratives and sources are discussed in *BSBC*, 87–117.
7 Bilogrivić 2010. See criticism of this concept from an archaeological perspective in Curta 2010a.
8 Ančić 2009; see also *BSBC*, 18–20.

9 For concerted criticism of the *De administrando* as a historical source for migration and settlement, see Borri 2011; Borri 2013, 235–50; *BSBC*, 104–17; Dzino 2010; Dzino 2014a. See also Alimov 2008; Ančić 2010; Ančić 2011; Curta 2010b.

10 There are a few recent studies which focus on the Dalmatian coast in post-Roman times, such as Prigent 2008; Borri 2009; Kislinger 2011; Curta 2010c.

11 Dalmatian archaeology for the period is covered by Evans 1989; Petrinec 2009. See also *BSBC*, 118–74; Sokol 2016.

12 Ančić 1997; Ančić 1998; Budak 1997; Borri 2008; *BSBC*, 175–210.

13 On mining, see Dušanić 2004; on roads, Bojanovski 1974; Miletić 2006.

14 The archaeology of most of the Dalmatian hinterland is best presented in Bojanovski 1988.

15 On the hinterland, see Busuladžić 2011; on the coast and islands, Begović and Schrunk 2001; see also Matijašić 2012, 146–47.

16 Dalmatia was not affected significantly by the turbulence of the fifth century: Posavec 2007; Gračanin 2015, 83, 85; Matijašić 2012, 151–53. The general outlook for the sixth century is very similar, at least in the coastal areas: Škegro 2001; Škegro 2002; Matijašić 2012, 177–79, 208–09.

17 Basler 1975–1976.

18 Wickham 2005, 473–81.

19 For a comparative perspective see the situation in Epirus, which is thought to have resulted from the emergence of a new ecclesiastical elite capable of marshalling the surplus resources extracted from the community in the forms of various donations: Bowden 2001; Saltzman 2002, 200–20. Whether these churches reflect the concerns and economic situation of a broad spectrum of society, or the presentation of elite status, is debatable and depends on the region; for the literature on this, see Chavarría and Lewit 2004, 6 n. 6.

20 Chevalier 1996.

21 Škegro 2009 (with bibliography); Prozorov 2011.

22 For mention of the *Sclavini*, see Procopius, *Wars* VII.40.31–32; on the Avars, see Theophylact Simocatta, *Historia* VII.11.9–12.9, 265–66; Theoph., 277; *CTC*, 402; Gregory I, *Letter to Maximus*; for the mission of Abbot Martin, see John IV, *Life* (where the *Liber pontificalis* mentions the freeing of hostages 'a gentibus') and *Bernoldi chronicon* s.a. 641, 415 (which has 'a barbaris'). 'Pagans' as 'Slavs' appear much later in Thomas of Split's *Historia Salonitana* (TS, ch. 8, 42–47). For contextualization of these events, see *BSBC*, 87–99; Curta 2010a, 311–12.

23 *DAI*, chs 29–31, 138–52; TS, ch. 7, 32–47. For literature on the *De administrando*, see above n. 9.

24 On the Dalmatian coast and islands, see *BJ*, 34–58; Tomičić 1998. The complex of fortifications should be seen as protecting communications, rather than as fortified *limes*, as Mate Suić (1995) and Miroslav Katić (2003) have rightly pointed out. See also Gračanin 2015, 83–84. On the hinterland, see Basler 1972, 37–61; Špehar 2008.

25 Ante Milošević has argued that Breza II was, in fact, an early medieval *curtis*, the residence of a local magnate from the eighth century onwards: Milošević 2011, 124–33.

26 Basler 1972, 56 (Crkvina-Makljenovac); Basler 1975; Chevalier 1996, 357–59 (Breza II); Bojanovski 1980–1981, 195–211, 208; Chevalier 1996, 174–78 (Vrba-Borak); Basler 1972, 78–82, Chevalier 1996, 352–55 (Dabravine); Chevalier 1996, 335–37 (Oborci).

27 Špehar 2008, 563, map 1. Thirteen out of the fifty-nine fortifications recorded in what is today Bosnia and Herzegovina are located in the north of the province: Špehar 2008, nos 1–3, 8, 10, 20, 27, 34–38, 59. On the use of fortifications for the protection of mining districts as a general imperial strategy in the wider region of northern Illyricum, see Dušanić 1995; Milinković 2007, 176–79.

28 Brandes and Haldon 2000.

29 Laiou 2005; for modern-day Serbia, see also Milinković 2008.

30 On Dalmatia, see Suić 2003, 341–75 and the literature in Gračanin 2015, 69. See also Ciglenečki 2008 (eastern Alps); Milinković 2008; Špehar 2008, 590–91 (Moesia); Bowden 2003; Bowden and Hodges 2004. On the wider context, see Dunn 1994; Milinković 2007, 166–79.

31 Curta 2013a.

32 Depopulation and lack of external settlement are attested for whole of south-eastern Europe in the seventh century: Curta 2013b.

33 See Levak 2007, 49–78, for a fresh insight, which unfortunately lacks more subtle contemporary methodological approaches.

34 The term is used by Thomas Barfield (2001) to describe secondary imperial formations, the so-called empires of the steppe in Asia; see also Pohl 1992.

35 However, we need to bear in mind that these steppe-empires could hide far more social complexity, as is argued for the Hunic empire by Kyun Jin Kim (2013).

36 *BJ*, 89–95; Rapanić 2007, 137–70; Basić 2008, 94–98; *BSBC*, 155–61. See also Budak 2012, 168–70; Borri 2013, 235–50 (Salona); Marin 1998 (Narona).

37 See Mardešić 2006. The lack of residential buildings might imply that sixth-century Salona was already one of those 'rural towns' (see below, n. 39) which had urban structures inhabited by elites inside the walls and decentralized settlement outside the walls.

38 For a useful overview of research on the Dalmatian cities, see Maraković and Turković 2006; Jurković, Maraković and Turković 2007; Jović Gazić 2011; and for Salona, see Chevalier and Mardešić 2008.

39 Myrto Veikou has pointed to the existence of a third space in middle-Byzantine urbanism, which is neither urban nor rural: Veikou 2009; Veikou 2010.

40 Bowden 2003; Sodini 2007; Nallbani and Buchet 2008; Veikou 2009; Veikou 2010 (Albania and Epirus); Brogiolo and Gelichi 2003 (for the western Adriatic ports).

41 Ante Milošević (2004) suggests that some church building in the deep hinterland was still happening in the seventh and eighth centuries.

42 For an assessment and review of the major literature, see Dzino 2014b, 134–36.

43 Bronson 1988.

44 Laiou and Morisson 2007, 38–42 (with literature). The Justinianic plague was recorded in Illyricum in 543 (Marcellinus, *Chronicle* s.a. 543, 107; Stathakopoulos 2004, 115) but its effect on (de)population has rarely been discussed, for lack of archaeological evidence: *BJ*, 65–67; Grmek 1998.

45 Sołtysiak 2006, 353–55; Dzino 2014b, 136–37.

46 See Shepard 2014 and the chapter by Shepard in this volume.

47 Curta 2005, 122–23. It has been suggested that the Sicilian fleet took care of the Adriatic: Prigent 2008, 394–98.

48 Kislinger 2011, 326–32; see also T. Brown 1995; Borri 2010, 2–10.

49 *BSBC*, 155–61. Some regions in the eastern Adriatic, such as Istria or Dyrrachium, functioned as semi-autonomous regions, *kleisourai*, and it is not impossible that Salona held a similar position: Curta 2004, 527; Curta 2013c, 62–65. See also Milošević 1995; Milošević 2008 (Salona); Jakšić 2008 (Zadar).

50 Petrinec 2009, esp. 311–20. A different approach is argued by Vladimir Sokol, who dates 'Old Croat' cemeteries from the end of the eighth and beginning of ninth centuries but does not take into account the seventh and eighth centuries: Sokol 2006 and updated English version in Sokol 2016.

51 *BSBC*, 118–54, 201–08.

52 There is a particular problem with the dating of some churches in the hinterland, such as Bilimišće near Zenica, and as some studies show there might well be evidence for the continuity of Christianity in the hinterland: Milošević 2004. For possible Christian continuity in the *polje* of Sinj, see Milošević 2008.

53 Recent studies by Ante Milošević imply that the Dalmatian hinterland had active exchanges with the Lombard kingdom in the seventh and eighth centuries, showing influences in both religious and secular material culture: Milošević 2012.

54 Ančić 2014. See also the chapters by Budak and Basić in this volume.

55 For the argument that incorporation into a new world-system results in the development of new identities, see Hall 2000, 244–46, 251–56.

56 *BSBC*, 146–54. See also Milošević 2016.

57 The idea was developed by Lujo Margetić (1977). For support for the argument among some modern Croatian scholars, see Ančić 2001; in archaeology: Milošević 2000; Rapanić 2001; Sokol 2006, esp. 158–62; in English: *BSBC*, 179–82.

58 *DAI*, ch. 29, 124–26, lines 68–78; ch. 30, 144, lines 87–90; ch. 31, 148, lines 21–25. The idea that Christianity continued in the hinterland after the Slavs arrived was prevalent during the Habsburg empire, before the discourse on the past was 'Yugoslavized' after 1918: Truhelka 1914, 221–27 (who maintained this opinion after 1918).

59 P. Brown 2003, 355–80.

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12 One more Renaissance?

Dalmatia and the revival of the
European economy

Neven Budak

Introduction: Dalmatia sidelined by western scholarship

In his classic book on the origins of the European economy, Michael McCormick offers medievalists a set of theses for discussion.[1] One of his main points is that the European economy started a new growth cycle around the year 800. Western economies and societies were once again linked to the Middle East, with western ships carrying goods in both directions. New markets appeared on river banks and seashores, with Venice playing an ever more important role.[2] The aim of this chapter is to investigate whether there is any evidence of Dalmatia participating in the revival. Various authors have expressed opinions about the 'awakening' of life in the province at the end of the eighth century.[3] Can these opinions be accepted and perhaps supported by new arguments?

The usual fate of both Dalmatia and Croatia in overviews and syntheses of European history is to fall outside the author's scope, a neglected child which belongs neither fully to the west nor unequivocally to the east.[4] The main reason for this is ignorance of Croatian, the language in which much of the literature has been written, but also a certain indifference towards what was going on in this double periphery. However, the attitude of scholars towards the eastern Adriatic region and the western Balkans has begun to change, and a number of papers and books have been published in more accessible languages. Among the recent publications dealing with the period discussed in this chapter are articles written by Florin Curta, Richard Hodges and Francesco Borri.[5] McCormick cannot be accused of neglecting the region completely, and he shows a relatively good knowledge of its history and sources. Yet a more complete picture of what was happening along the eastern Adriatic coast might have influenced his conclusions.

There is reason enough to argue that the seventh century was a time of real and decisive crisis in late antique Dalmatia. Archaeological data is scarce. But according to the evidence we have, big cities like Salona and Narona, and even some smaller ones such as Epidaurus, ceased to exist.[6] Except for some coastal and insular towns, the main centres of life became hill forts, most of which formed part of Justinian's maritime *limes*, while others lay in the immediate hinterland of the coastal towns.[7] Society, so far as we can tell, became militarized. Slavs started to penetrate and settle the region, although it is impossible to be more precise

about their numbers or the speed with which they moved towards the coast.[8] We can assume that the fate of Dalmatia was much like that of the Greek provinces, where garrisons were withdrawn from the mainland sometime around the beginning of the reign of Heraclius (610–641), while strongholds such as Thessaloniki survived thanks to their coastal position.[9] It remains unclear whether Dalmatia was placed directly under the authority of the exarchs of Ravenna, or whether they simply kept an eye on the province because of its importance for communications between the exarchate and the capital.[10] In either case, no Dalmatian troops are mentioned in the list of armies at the disposal of Emperor Justinian II towards the end of the seventh century.[11]

Throughout the eighth century, social structures in Dalmatia seem to have remained fairly static, both in the coastal towns and in the hinterland. According to archaeological evidence from cemeteries excavated in the immediate hinterland of the Adriatic coast, rural societies showed little social differentiation, at least as far as funerary rites are concerned.[12] However, we see a change after 750: an elite would seem to have emerged, presumably of Slav origin, attested by gold – possibly gifts from an unknown source, which will be discussed later. Communication with other regions was almost non-existent, as was long-distance trade even in the coastal towns (unless we are simply dealing with a lack of evidence). To this we should add the picture of eighth-century Dalmatia in Croatian scholarship of a region mostly neglected by Byzantium before Charlemagne started to show an interest in yet another province of the former western empire.[13]

The clash of the two empires at the beginning of the ninth century not only put Dalmatia in the spotlight, leading to information about this province being preserved, but also resulting in more activity in the region, especially by sea.[14] Byzantine and Frankish fleets vied for control of the most important harbours and strongholds, such as Venice and Zadar. A number of reports survive on emissaries, officials and fleets cruising the Adriatic between 805 and 812.[15] This was far more intense than what we know of maritime activities only a few decades earlier. Pointing out the growing importance of Venice, McCormick recognizes the turning point between the two epochs in the mid-eighth century. Venetian ships were sailing the east coast of Italy and reaching the Holy Land every year; their merchants traded with the Muslim world, selling slaves and bringing Arab gold to Italy.[16]

Evidence of east-west communications and Dalmatia's involvement before *c.* 800

Discussing eighth-century indicators for sailing and commerce along the eastern Adriatic coast, which is traditionally deemed the better of the two sides of the Adriatic for travelling towards the Straits of Otranto, McCormick very briefly notes data on the connections between Istria and Constantinople. He believes that artefacts of western origin (for example, Frankish swords) found in Croatian graves dated around 800 are an overflow of the abundant Venetian exports to the Arab world. He suggests that Dalmatia in the eighth century was in no substantive

way touched by the revival of Venetian trade and that communication along its coast was only sporadic.[17]

Sauro Gelichi has published a number of articles on archaeological research carried out partly in Venice, but mostly in its lagoons and Comacchio, which offer a somewhat different interpretation of the economic activities in the Adriatic.[18] Gelichi believes that the peace established between the Lombards and the Byzantines in 680 made possible the resumption of medium- and long-range trade, while creating opportunities for Venice to develop into an important trade centre. He argues that Venice, like Comacchio, was placed in a broad trading system that straddled the Mediterranean. Comacchio was, in his opinion, one of the northern Adriatic emporia in which a class of *negotiantes* conducted trade; the aim was not only to satisfy an elite demand for luxury goods, but also to supply a broader market with everyday necessities such as wine, oil or *garum*.[19] Arguing for the eighth century as a period of economic activity in the Adriatic, Gelichi opposes the prevailing ideas of scholars like McCormick or Chris Wickham, who see it as a time of stagnation, at least during the first half.[20] He also rejects Ross Balzaretti's suggestion that towns in the Po valley developed modestly in the eighth century, but remained isolated from one another, like cellular units.[21] Archaeology attests the opposite: not only were these emporia large (possibly even larger than those of northern Europe), but they also had impressive infrastructures such as harbour facilities and artificial canals.[22] However, this development, significant as it was, has left almost no traces in the written records. This can be misleading for historians, but also for archaeologists in areas where sufficient research has yet to be conducted, as, for example, in Croatia.

Gelichi's conclusions are important for those who try to understand what happened along the eastern Adriatic coast. If places like Torcello or Grado were economically active, participating in trade throughout the eighth century, at least some of the ships supporting them with goods must have sailed along the Istrian and Dalmatian shores and islands: firstly because sailing there was safer than along the western Adriatic coast, and secondly because the coastal towns in these provinces were in Byzantine hands.

Adding to Gelichi's conclusions when discussing the results of excavations at Butrint, Richard Hodges believes that it was the capture of Ravenna by Aistulf in 751 which triggered the revival of trade in the Adriatic.[23] While the archaeological evidence from Butrint supports the idea of the town's new trade reaching as far as Apulia and even the Crimea before 800, it is not easy to agree with Hodges' view about two axes of trade in the Adriatic: one stretching from Venice past Istria as far as Zadar, and the other connecting the heel of Italy with the southern Adriatic ports. Such a vision denies the existence of a commercial route connecting Venice with Constantinople, because it only recognizes the existence of two unlinked trading zones in the Adriatic. Hodges also claims that Byzantium's influence did not reach further north than northern Albania, which contradicts other evidence such as the large number of eighth-century Byzantine gold coins found in Croatia (discussed below, 179–80).

McCormick's theses were also criticized by Curta in an article on trade in the eastern and northern region of the Adriatic in the eighth and ninth centuries.[24] Although he accepts the possibility that some coastal towns were involved in trading, Curta dismisses the idea of any substantial commercial activity being undertaken by Dalmatians or Croats before 900.[25] Unlike McCormick, he discusses in more detail the abundance of Byzantine *solidi* found in the territories between the Zrmanja and Cetina rivers, comparing it to the distribution of Carolingian swords, winged lances and coins from the ninth century.[26] In Curta's opinion, the eighty-five *solidi* of Constantine V (741–775) minted in Syracuse do not signify commercial activity, but should rather be seen as gifts to members of the Dalmatian (possibly Slav) elite, just like the weapons and other luxury objects mostly found in graves.

Not very much can be added to the list shown in Table 12.1 below, but a few important details are left out. The first concerns Theodosios III, a rather unimportant emperor who reigned for only a short time (May 715–March 717). His name is recorded in two Dalmatian sources, independently of one another. The first is a note about the reconstruction of a church in Trogir during his reign, while the other is a mention in Thomas of Split's *Historia Salonitana* that Martin was archbishop of Split in the time of Emperor Theodosios.[27] Although both sources are of a much later date, it seems beyond doubt that the emperor's name was for some reason remembered in Dalmatia. This must have been due to some sort of written evidence (a letter or possibly a charter), which in turn must have resulted from communications across the Adriatic: after all, somebody had to carry the document from Constantinople to Dalmatia.[28]

Contacts between the Byzantine authorities and Dalmatia in that period are also attested by the – now lost – seal of Paul, exarch of Ravenna (723–726).[29] Although neither the evidence about Theodosios III nor that for Paul the exarch's seal is conclusive, it does hint at activity and communications on the route between Constantinople and Ravenna, via Split and Dalmatia, in the first quarter of the eighth century. To this, of course, we should add all the data collected by McCormick (see Table 12.1).

Even though very little can be said about the Dalmatian church in the eighth century, we do know that some Dalmatian bishops (from Split, Rab, Osor and Kotor) attended the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.[30] Less reliable is the statement about the presence of Dalmatian bishops at the Council of Hieria in 754. We should accept Lujo Margetić's opinion that Michael the Syrian, the author of the report on this council, is not trustworthy in this instance.[31]

Although McCormick mentions the Plea of Rižana of 804, he makes little use of what the text can tell us about economic history.[32] The Istrian citizens, complaining to Charlemagne's envoys about Duke John, claimed that they used to send their taxes to the emperor in Constantinople.[33] They added that those wanting to be granted the title of consul (*hypatos*) had to put their request to the emperor.[34] Since there are two consuls mentioned in the text, this is further indication of direct contacts between the eastern Adriatic coast and the Byzantine capital.

Table 12.1 Data on communications in the Adriatic *c*. 700–800*

709	Justinian II (685–695, 705–711) sends a fleet against Ravenna (via Sicily)
709–712	Captives from Ravenna, who had been taken to Constantinople, return to Ravenna
712	Philippikos (711–713) recalls Archbishop Felix I from exile and sends him to Ravenna (via Sicily)
713–715	Scholasticius, exarch of Italy, travels from Constantinople to Rome
717–720	Leo III (717–741) confirms privileges for Epiphanius, *scriniarius* and *apocrisiarius* of Ravenna
725–726	Leo III sends an anonymous *spatharios* to depose Pope Gregory II (715–731)
c. 732–*c*. 735	Lombards take Ravenna; at the request of Pope Gregory III (731–741), the Venetians take Ravenna from the Lombards
732–733	Leo III sends a fleet against the pope, Rome and Italy, but the fleet is shipwrecked in the Adriatic
774	Adalgis, son of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, escapes to Byzantine territory, presumably Dyrrachium
Pre-776–778	Istrians blind Bishop Maurice of Novigrad (Cittanova), who was obeying Charlemagne's orders and attempting to collect Peter's Pence
788	Byzantine invasion of Calabria
795	Venetian merchants returning from the Holy Land bring relics of Sts Genesius and Eugenius
797	Charlemagne's emissaries travel to Harun al-Rashid, presumably via Venice

*Adapted from *OEE*, 860–87.

Finally, the representatives of the Istrian towns complained that they were forced to provide ship service to Venice, Ravenna and Dalmatia, as well as by river.[35] Such a burden could obviously not have been imposed upon the Istrians had they not been used to sailing, or lacked adequate ships. Apart from voyages undertaken by the Istrians, the text repeatedly mentions emissaries from both empires coming to Istria on a regular basis. Taking into account that Istria came under Frankish rule as early as 778, and that the report on customs during the Byzantines' rule therefore refers to an even earlier period, the Plea of Rižana is strong evidence for intensifying communications in the northern Adriatic and along its eastern coast in the second half of the eighth century. Both McCormick and Francesco Borri point out that, according to Gottschalk of Orbais, the Latin inhabitants of Dalmatia used the same terminology to describe the Byzantine emperor in the 840s as the Istrians did in 804, and the Venetians at much the same time. In descriptions of journeys made to Constantinople to obtain certain honours, they all call the emperor *imperium*.[36]

Little can be said about the things that travelled, as McCormick put it, because of the dearth of archaeological finds and the even fewer publications on what has been discovered. One should note, though, that there is evidence – albeit very modest – of imports of silk to Dalmatia in the eighth century, something that

neither McCormick nor Curta remarks upon. A piece of silk, seemingly Syrian, was recently found in the reliquary of St Anastasius in the cathedral of Split.[37] It was probably a donation to the saint. Thus it does not mean trade, but it is evidence for the 'travelling of things'. To this we might also add the silk garments found in the grave of a Croatian dignitary at Biskupija near Knin. The garments themselves have not survived, but they are mentioned in the report composed immediately after the discovery of the sarcophagus.[38] According to some scholars, the grave dates to *c*. 800, while others believe it to be several decades later, in which case, of course, these items would be no evidence for any kind of communication in the eighth century.[39]

Coins as hints of trade or gift giving?

Both McCormick and Curta make use of coins and their distribution patterns to support their arguments, although Curta discusses them in more detail;[40] and while both authors compare the distribution patterns of gold coin finds with those of Carolingian swords, the latter await full analysis and will not be considered here.[41] As with the information about different travellers, the data about coins reveals a chronological pattern, with a sudden increase in the number of surviving coins from the 740s onwards. Most of the coins, usually found in graves, are *solidi* of Constantine V (*c*. 85), all struck in the mint at Syracuse between 760 and 775.[42] There are also coins of Leo III and Leo IV. *Solidi* of Leo III and Constantine V have been found in Istria, too, but in nothing like the numbers found in Dalmatia.[43] Furthermore, the quantity of surviving ninth-century coins cannot be compared to the number of Constantine V's *solidi*. How can we explain such a sudden increase in the number of coins that came to Dalmatia from Sicily at the beginning of the second half of the eighth century? Joachim Werner suggests that the source of the coins was a family treasure, gradually dispersed into the graves of family members.[44] Tomislav Šeparović argues that the money might have been tribute paid by the Dalmatian towns to Croat warlords in the hinterland, to prevent them from attacking Byzantine possessions; while Vedrana Delonga thinks that the *solidi* were a reward, given by the Franks to Croat chieftains for fighting against Byzantium, with the gold having come from the Franks' plundering of the Avars.[45] Curta's proposal is more convincing: he believes that the *solidi* were a gift and not the result of trade.[46] He supports his thesis with the distribution pattern of luxury weapons and other objects, found in graves or preserved in churches. Curta suggests that all of these came as gifts to members of the newly formed elite, who identified themselves and the boundaries of their social group by displaying such objects.[47]

This may be true, but it leaves open the questions of who exactly gave the gifts to whom, and why? I would suggest that Constantine V may have decided to secure the loyalty of local lords in Dalmatia during his wars against the Bulgars.[48] In centuries to come, this would be the usual Byzantine tactic against their aggressive neighbour: Dalmatians – and later Croats – were lured into the Byzantine camp by money or titles during the reigns of Basil I (867–886), Romanos

I Lekapenos (920–944) and Basil II (976–1025).[49] But it is less clear who actually received this gift. Money found in graves at Biskupija near Knin would suggest that the recipients were Slav lords, members of an emerging elite. But these lords were buried several decades after Constantine V's reign, and assuming this was when the gifts or payments were sent, this Slav elite either did not yet exist, or at least has not yet been traced in archaeological evidence. Therefore, it could well be that the original recipients of the coins were not the same as those in whose graves they were buried. We may assume that the coins arrived in Dalmatia fairly soon after they were minted and that they circulated within the province. Thus they either changed owner, or their owners changed burial custom, placing the coins in the graves a generation or so after receiving them.[50]

According to Nikola Jakšić, Byzantium was able to control the main communication route from Nin to Knin, the central stronghold of the Dalmatian interior, throughout the eighth century.[51] His arguments are based on the late antique churches along this route which have survived, unlike those further away which were sacked by barbarians. Three burials have been discovered connected to these churches, containing deluxe gold jewellery of eighth-century Byzantine origin. The women who wore these jewels would have belonged to a Christian elite, most probably in the service of the Byzantine empire. Were the *solidi* of Constantine V intended to remunerate those who were securing the hinterland of the Dalmatian towns? If so, was this important transaction linked to Constantine's ecclesiastical policy in the western Balkans, as far as we understand it? And with the shift of power after 800, did the *solidi* fall into the hands of those who took over Knin and other important fortifications in Dalmatia's backyard?

In some ways, we are left with more questions than we started with. But what is clear is that coins and goods circulated quite intensively between 650–750 and that the apparently static Dalmatian societies started to change under the influence of politics in the Balkans and a growing economy in the Adriatic basin.[52] By around 760, a new elite was forming in the hinterland, only to be replaced by another one a generation later. This older elite was probably Christian, while the core of the new one would have been newly converted pagans. But what was happening in the coastal towns? Did a similar change take place there, too?

Buildings and doings in the coastal towns

Unfortunately, archaeological research in urban areas has been limited, while written sources are almost non-existent. Thus we have to rely mostly on art historical analysis of the monuments and sculpture fragments which survive. There is little evidence of building activity in the Dalmatian towns from around 600 until the end of the eighth century. Ivan Basić and Miljenko Jurković have argued convincingly that the church of Split tried to upgrade to an archbishopric sometime before 800,[53] and that this was followed by refurbishment of the newly established cathedral. They believe that a sarcophagus bearing an inscription with the name of Archbishop John should be dated to this period.[54] Kotor saw a similar development, with the church of St Trypho being built at the beginning of the ninth

century, after the acquisition of the saint's relics;[55] a sarcophagus of the donor, a citizen named Andreacius, also survives.[56]

However, by far the biggest undertaking was the church of the Holy Trinity at Zadar, or St Donatus as it is known today.[57] It is a huge building, not just by eighth-century standards, surpassing anything built in Dalmatia between the sixth and the eleventh centuries. Although the church was erected in two (almost consecutive) phases, it is difficult to believe that the bishop of Zadar was the only one among his Dalmatian colleagues who could have financed such an edifice. Money obviously had to come from elsewhere. Is it possible that the *solidi* of Constantine V were sent to Zadar in order to fund this construction? This could be another explanation for the coins' appearance in such large numbers, although it is true that none of them was found in Zadar itself. Considering the emperor's great interest in ecclesiastical matters and his dispute with Rome over jurisdiction, Constantine might have decided to symbolize in stone his power in Zadar, the main Byzantine stronghold in Dalmatia.[58]

Over time, some of this money, even if invested in building, may have ended up in the hands of the warlords inland, who used it not as a means of payment but rather of self-presentation, placing it in the graves of their dead. However, the mechanisms of this assumed monetary transmission remain unclear.

The building activity we can observe in the last quarter of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries in Dalmatia was accompanied by an awakening of literacy. Our two sarcophagi from Split bear Latin inscriptions giving the names and titles of those whose remains they contained.[59] In Kotor and its surroundings, a number of early-ninth-century inscriptions or fragments have been preserved.[60] In the Archaeological Museum in Split there is a fragment of an eighth-century sarcophagus lid from Trogir, bearing the name of Emperor Constantine.[61] It is unclear whether this was Constantine V or VI, but either way it attests connections between Trogir and Constantinople in the second half of the eighth century, as well as the revival of the Roman epigraphic tradition, or 'epigraphic habit' as some have termed it.[62]

Apart from epigraphy, there is one more text which might cautiously be dated to the late eighth or early ninth century: the testament of a certain Prior Peter. A thorough, primarily linguistic analysis of the charter, preserved in a sixteenth-century transcript, is required.[63] But if my assumption and that of Marijan Horvat is correct, Peter's testament would be the oldest surviving document from Dalmatia and evidence for the rebirth of a written culture. Although the sarcophagus from Split probably belonged to another Peter, a prior who was a few decades younger than our Peter, its inscription, telling us that he was born, raised and educated in Split, supports the idea of a revival of a written culture in the city.[64] The importance of the word 'educated' can hardly be overestimated. The number of terms and measurements used in Peter's testament which do not appear in later, tenth-century wills supports Horvat's claim that it was written around 800. This is true of the measurement of land called a *fassa*, and of the strange formula describing the quantity of land to be given to the church of St John in Brač: 'omnis terra, quae circam ea est in quantum gallus potest audiri, dum canit'. Peter states that his

wife should take care of their sons 'usquedum ipsi infantes ad ordinem pervenire possint' – until they reach the age for entering the city council (*ordo*). This was an archaic term, even in Late Antiquity. A further point that Horvat did not notice is that out of the eleven names mentioned in the testament, none is Slavic: they are all Christian or Roman. This would have been unusual for the tenth century, not to mention later periods.[65] It is hard to believe that a late medieval forger would use such archaic and unfamiliar terms, measurements or dating, or that they would completely ignore Slavic names. But it is also striking that all these terms come from Roman times – except possibly for the crowing rooster – as if Peter and another prior, Andrew of Zadar, deliberately used them to stress their Romanness.

The testament helps illustrate the economic status of the Dalmatian urban elite. Peter possessed two houses in Split (one inherited from his father) and several plots of land, meadows and vineyards around the town or on the island of Brač. Some he had inherited, but others he bought. He paid for them in gold, at a cost of 4, 5 and 15 *solidi* respectively, while the land around the church of St John on Brač cost him one pound of gold (*libra auri*) or 72 *solidi*. This is equivalent to the total number of eighth-century gold coins found in Croatia up to now. If our dating of the testament to around 800 is correct, then it sheds a very different light on the use of gold along the eastern Adriatic coast. How did Peter get this gold, and where did he get it from? In his will, he proudly stresses that he planted one of his vineyards himself ('quam ego plantaui'). Does this imply that his income came from selling wine? If so, to whom did he sell it, and would this trade have enabled him to accumulate such a quantity of gold? Maybe his buyers were the ship owners who, according to Gelichi, supplied the northern Adriatic emporia with wine? Questions such as these remain unanswered for the time being. But it seems that Peter more than doubled the possessions he inherited from his father; and since all the land he bought was in or around Split – including one plot from his own uncle – such transactions cannot illustrate the transfer of gold coins to the elite in the hinterland.

Peter possessed slaves, although we do not know how many. He even had a daughter with one of them, to whom he left a vineyard, after setting both her and her mother free. He also liberated all the other slaves, his whole *familia*. But again, since we lack any more details, we cannot be sure that he earned a profit from involvement in the slave trade.

Peter's testament and the other (unfortunately scarce) written and material evidence available suggest an elite emerging in the Dalmatian and Istrian towns in the second half of the eighth century. They were *parentes*, in the words of the Istrians complaining about Duke John in 804. As Borri demonstrates, these were people connected through their maritime activities in the Adriatic, sharing a common identity but without a common ethnic denominator. They were (or used to be) Latin subjects of the Byzantine empire, members of both the military and mercantile elite.[66] They must have survived the worst of the crisis between 640 and 750, and then rose with the tide of economic growth and renewed imperial interest in the affairs in the Adriatic basin.[67] At the same time, as noted, a military elite was emerging in the hinterland among both the Christian and the pagan populations.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is clear that communications in the second half of the eighth century along the eastern Adriatic coast intensified, although they had probably not ceased altogether in the previous decades. It is likely that the fall of Ravenna only added to the importance of Zadar as a stronghold on the way between Venice and Constantinople, while ecclesiastical disputes helped Split to appropriate the role Salona had played almost two centuries earlier. Coastal towns and their hinterland could have become more important for the eastern emperor with his growing engagement in campaigns against the Bulgars, and this perhaps gave impetus to the emergence of an elite warrior class even before the wars against the Carolingians. Ecclesiastical disputes with Rome only added value to Dalmatia. Did Constantine V decide to send a substantial sum of money to secure the loyalty of the warriors in the hinterland? Or

Table 12.2 Revised data on communications in the Adriatic *c*. 700–800

692–708	Damian, Dalmatian by origin, is archbishop of Ravenna
c. 695–698	Coin of Emperor Leontius (found on the island of Vis)
709	Justinian II sends a fleet against Ravenna (via Sicily)
709–712	Captives from Ravenna, who had been taken to Constantinople, return to Ravenna
712	Philippikos recalls Archbishop Felix I from exile and sends him to Ravenna (via Sicily)
713–715	Scholasticius, exarch of Italy, travels from Constantinople to Rome
715–717	Contacts between Split and Theodosios III
717–720	Leo III confirms privileges for Epiphanius, *scriniarius* and *apocrisiarius* of Ravenna
723–726	Seal of Paul, exarch of Ravenna, in Salona
725–726	Leo III sends an anonymous *spatharios* to depose Pope Gregory II
c. 732–*c*. 735	Lombards take Ravenna; at the request of Pope Gregory III, the Venetians take Ravenna from the Lombards
732–733	Leo III sends a fleet against the pope, Rome and Italy, but the fleet is shipwrecked in the Adriatic
750s–770s	A large number of Constantine V's coins transferred from Sicily to Dalmatia
774	Adalgis, son of Desiderius, king of the Lombards, escapes to Byzantine territory, presumably Dyrrachium
Pre-776–778	Istrians blind Bishop Maurice of Novigrad (Cittanova), who was obeying Charlemagne's orders and attempting to collect Peter's Pence
Pre-788	Istrians are regular visitors to Constantinople, in order to deliver their taxes and receive confirmation of their titles
787	Dalmatian bishops attend the Second Council of Nicaea
788	Byzantine invasion of Calabria
795	Venetian merchants returning from the Holy Land bring relics of Sts Genesius and Eugenius
797	Charlemagne's emissaries travel to Harun al-Rashid, presumably via Venice
Pre-804	Istrians regularly sail along riverways, as well as by sea to Venice, Ravenna and Dalmatia

perhaps to finance the building of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Zadar, as a symbol of the imperial presence in the capital of Dalmatia? If so, this may help explain how gold coins from Zadar reached the hinterland, although we lack any kind of evidence or clues about the process. Closer involvement with the system of communications in the Mediterranean, accompanied by an emphatic presence of central authority, might have caused a revival of identification with Romanness among the Dalmatian elite, expressed through the revival of literacy.[68] However, neither our written nor our material sources allow us to come to any firm conclusions about the emergence of elites in both coastal towns and the hinterland.

McCormick turned scholarly attention to new ways and methods of researching the Dark Ages, and offered some generally correct sketches of what he thought was going on along the eastern Adriatic coast. Building on his conclusions, it is possible to construct a new interpretation of the history of Dalmatia in the second half of the eighth century and the very beginning of the ninth. Taking into account all the activities registered in the material and written sources, I believe that we may see how the age of Constantine V and his immediate successors was in fact a kind of Renaissance after more than a century of stagnation and decay.[69]

Notes

1 *OEE.*
2 For a summary of his theses, see *OEE*, 778–79, 792.
3 For an overview, see Jakšić 2010; Basić and Jurković 2011.
4 An example is the otherwise brilliant book by Chris Wickham (2005), which mentions Croatia only once in a footnote, and makes no reference to Dalmatia whatsoever. A similar point is made by Florin Curta (2013, 145–46).
5 Curta 2010; Hodges 2008; Borri 2009; Borri 2010.
6 Suić 1999; Rapanić 2001.
7 Goldstein 2005.
8 For a detailed overview of the previous literature, see *BSBC*, esp. 92–174. See also the chapter by Dzino in the volume.
9 Curta 2006, 70–81; Curta 2011, 97–134. The find of a single coin of Emperor Leontius (695–698) on the island of Vis is inconclusive as evidence, but it at least indicates a continuation of contacts between this island and Byzantine territories in Italy; on this find, see Buškariol 2000, 234 n. 6 and 251, fig. 2.
10 Borri 2009, 24–29, with an extensive bibliography, but without taking into account anything written in Croatian or other regional Slavic languages.
11 Borri 2009, 43. It may be possible, however, that Dalmatian troops were included in the army of Italy.
12 Evans 1989, 113–205.
13 Margetić 2000, 133–36; Goldstein 2003, 23–26; Goldstein 1996.
14 In 2000, as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of Charlemagne's coronation, an exhibition on *Croats and Carolingians* (*Hrvati i Karolinzi*) was held in Split and Brescia, accompanied by a catalogue containing a number of articles on Dalmatia and Croatia in the early Middle Ages, with an emphasis on the ninth century: *HiK*. Contributors include historians, art historians and archaeologists, with many arguing that the Croats came to Dalmatia as warriors fighting on the Carolingian side against Byzantium. Although this thesis is still popular among Croatian scholars, others reject the idea of such a late date for the arrival of the Croats in Dalmatia. While some believe that they settled during the first half of the seventh century, along with other Slav

groupings, others reject the idea of migration and settlement, seeking evidence for the emergence of a Croatian ethnic identity from the ninth or even tenth century onwards. For the latter approach, see for example Raukar 1997 (a history of medieval Croatia which simply neglects the period before 800); Budak 2008; *BSBC*.

15 *OEE*, 892–98.
16 *OEE*, 523–31.
17 *OEE*, 733.
18 Gelichi 2008; Gelichi 2010, 2; Gelichi 2012. See also the chapter by Gelichi in this volume.
19 Gelichi 2012, 227–31.
20 Wickham 2005, 708–20; Gelichi 2008, 108–11.
21 Balzaretti 1996; Gelichi 2008, 83, 108–11.
22 Gelichi 2008, 109.
23 Hodges 2008.
24 Curta 2010.
25 Names used in this text for describing the population living along the eastern Adriatic coast have a primarily political meaning. The people referred to as Dalmatians are thus inhabitants of Byzantine Dalmatia or of the entire former Roman Dalmatia, while the term 'Slavs' is used to describe the population of the Carolingian-dominated hinterland. It can be replaced by 'Croats' after this group managed to come to power in the land which the Carolingians called *Dalmatia atque Liburnia* and which was later known as Croatia: Budak 2008.
26 Curta 2010, 270–73.
27 TS, ch. 13, 61; Budak 2012, 172. After initially supporting the authenticity of the Trogir note, Ivo Babić came to accept the opinion of other scholars that it was actually a humanist forgery. However, he fails to explain why the forger would have picked up the name of an insignificant Byzantine emperor, who had by then fallen into almost total oblivion: Babić 2012, 297–99.
28 It is interesting that one of the two early Byzantine coins found in Poland is a *solidus* of Theodosios III, the other being a *solidus* of Heraclius dating from 616–625: Salamon 1996. Maciej Salamon discusses the problem of the distribution of Byzantine coins on the fringes of the Avar khaganate and agrees that they attest contacts between the Avars and their neighbours (whether as gifts, trade, or the distribution of spoils). Should we not also take this possibility into account when explaining the appearance of the eighty-five *solidi* of Constantine V in Dalmatia?
29 This seal was apparently found in Salona, which is hard to believe since the town had probably already been abandoned by then. Arsen Duplančić's suggestion that it was found in Split, where it was kept in the Archaeological Museum, is more convincing: Duplančić 2013, 220–21.
30 Darrouzès 1975, 63, 64, 68. See also the chapter by Komatina in this volume.
31 Margetić 2000, 136. Margetić suggests that Byzantine rule over Dalmatia effectively ceased in the first half of the seventh century, and that the emperors failed to restore it before the second half of the eighth: Margetić 2000, 132–39; contra Goldstein 1996, 258–59.
32 *OEE*, 256.
33 The most recent edition of the text, with comments in Slovenian and German, is in Krahwinkler 2004, 67–81; and an earlier edition is Petranović and Margetić 1983–1984. On the plea, see the chapter by Štih in this volume.
34 'Isti solidi tempore Grecorum in pallatio eos portabat' and 'Et qui volebant meliorem honorem habere de tribuno, ambulabat ad imperium, qui ordinabat illum ypato': Krahwinkler 2004, 72.
35 'Ambulamus navigio in Venetias, Rauennam, Dalmatiam et per flumina [. . .]': Krahwinkler 2004, 76–78; Borri 2010, 22.

36 McCormick 1998, 23; Borri 2010, 23. See also Basić 2015, 444–45. Gottschalk distinguishes the Latin inhabitants of Dalmatia from the Dalmatians, who were subjects of the Croat ruler.

37 Belamarić 2014, 327–30. See Fig. 18.2 on 269.

38 Radić 1896.

39 For an analysis of the grave goods in this and other tombs in Biskupija, with reference to older literature, see Petrinec 2009, 75–81.

40 *OEE*, 361–69; Curta 2010, 269–70. McCormick stresses the fact that after 775 the majority of Byzantine coins in the Adriatic basin came from Constantinople, while prior to that Sicilian coins dominated the area.

41 On specific types of Carolingian swords, see Bilogrivić 2011; and see now Milošević 2016.

42 The data on the number of coins discovered and preserved differs from author to author. Šeparović (2003, 130) mentions seventy-four pieces kept in archaeological museums in Dalmatia, but also points to museum inventories with entries on several more finds, now lost. Mirnik (2004, 210) lists another twelve coins of Constantine V and Leo IV and two of Leo III and Constantine V, all kept in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Two of these coins were found in Lika, a region to the north of the area of central Dalmatia where most of the gold coins have been found. Curta (2010, 270) draws attention to another five coins kept in the National Museum in Belgrade, allegedly originating from Dalmatia.

43 Curta 2010, 270.

44 Werner 1978–1979.

45 Šeparović 2003, 132; Milošević 2000, 119–20; Delonga 1981.

46 Curta 2010, 272–73.

47 A similar practice with grave goods can be seen at the cemetery in Mikulčice (in today's Czech Republic). Although only a single coin of Emperor Michael III (842–867) has been found in one of the graves, some of the other male burials also contain just a single gold object, usually a button or a simple gold piece. In contrast, women's and children's graves sometimes contain more gold. Apart from one or two gold objects, swords and other artefacts representing social status are also found in the elite male graves. Most of these graves are situated around Church III. For this and many other interesting comparisons, see Kouřil and Poláček 2013.

48 On Constantine's wars against the Bulgars, see *BaB*, 89–95.

49 Budak and Raukar 2006, 115–16, 121–22, 125–26. Trpimir, who ruled Croatia from *c*. 845 to 864, was also involved in a war against the Bulgars, although it is not clear whether the initiative for this came from Byzantium: Budak 1994, 73.

50 We should also consider the possibility that gold was an even more valuable gift after the Isaurian emperors confiscated the *patrimonium Sancti Petri* in southern Italy, thus depriving Rome of gold coin and causing devaluation. Under such circumstances, only Constantine V was in a position to distribute gold coins in the Adriatic basin: Prigent 2004. See also the chapter by Betti in this volume.

51 Jakšić 2008.

52 Danijel Dzino offers a well-founded interpretation of social developments in Dalmatia from the seventh to the ninth centuries: see the chapter by Dzino in this volume.

53 Basić and Jurković 2011, 172–76. See also the chapter by Basić in this volume.

54 Basić and Jurković 2011, 172–74. Dating another sarcophagus with an inscription mentioning Peter, the prior of Split, has been more problematic, but Jakšić concludes that since this sarcophagus' decoration imitates that of Archbishop John, it was made in the period between *c*. 780–790 and *c*. 930–940, most probably in the ninth century: Jakšić 2010.

55 Jakšić 2009, 86–87.

56 Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, 95–96.

57 Vežić 1995.

58 On the role of Zadar, see Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 62–67; Budak 1998, 107–08. Mladen Ančić (2009, 112–14) assumes that the construction of the upper part of the church was an imperial undertaking, but dates it to after the Treaty of Aachen. Similarly, Trpimir Vedriš (2012) suggests that the building of the church was coordinated with the translation of the relics of St Anastasia from Constantinople to Zadar – sometime between 804 and 811. Pavuša Vežić (2002) argues for two construction phases: the first in the late eighth century and the second, including the addition of the upper floor, at the beginning of the ninth. However, would the first decade of the ninth century – a time of conflict between Byzantium and Charlemagne – really have been the right moment for the Byzantines to build the largest church in Dalmatia? The first, eighth-century phase is more likely to have received imperial support, since even building the high ground floor would have exceeded the resources of a medium-sized town like Zadar. Vežić also notes that the upper floor design shows Carolingian influences, with features resembling the Palatine Chapel in Aachen. If the second phase was built after the peace treaty, it is surely unlikely that the architects would have chosen a Carolingian model to represent Byzantine domination. See also the chapters by Ančić and Vedriš in this volume.

59 'Hic requiiscet fragelis et inutelis Iohannis peccator harchiepiscopus; In nomine Domini. Ego Petrus do [. . .] e prior, natus, nutritus et eruditus in Spalato, filius bene memorie domno Cosme inclito priori, qui posui hec tumulum recepsionis peccatrici corporis mei': Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, 58–59, 69–71.

60 Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, 88 (Bijela), 88–89 (Prevlaka), 89 (Tivat), 92–96 (Kotor), 100–01 (Ulcinj).

61 Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, 47.

62 Conant 2012, 7.

63 Horvat (1951). Horvat's dating is criticized by Ljubo Karaman (1952), who agrees that it is the oldest testament from Dalmatia, but believes it was composed around 860. Jakov Stipišić (1959) attempts to date the testament to the late eleventh century, when another charter from Split mentions a prior called Peter. He argues that including both the date and 'amen' at the end of the document was a twelfth-century custom, and has no comparisons in the three oldest-known Dalmatian testaments from the tenth and eleventh centuries. But since the testament was copied several times before acquiring its present form, it is not impossible that copyists changed it in accordance with the *formulae* of their own time. Stipišić also claims that the *arenga* of Peter's testament closely resembles that of a testament from Split from 1144, but differs from the earliest tenth-century Zadar testaments, without fully supporting this assertion. He does not engage with Horvat's analysis and reasons for dating Peter's testament to the early ninth century, nor does he address the similarities Horvat found between Peter's testament and that of the Zadar prior Andrew from 918; Stipišić simply notes that while the term *fassa*, as a measure for land, is only found in Peter's and Andrew's testaments, it does not appear in later documents. Stipišić's arguments do not, in my opinion, convince, and his attempt to relate Prior Peter with the Peter on our sarcophagus' inscription must also be rejected, since, as we have seen, the sarcophagus should most probably be dated to the ninth century. Nor can I agree with Nada Klaić (1971), who claims that Peter's testament was a late medieval forgery, on the assumption that the charter imitates the form of a notarial document not known before the thirteenth century. In the form we now have it, the charter does not resemble a notarial document, nor did its author sign as a public notary, but rather as a presbyter.

64 See above, n. 54.

65 Jakić-Cestarić 1972.

66 Borri 2010, 24.

67 There is only one, not very reliable, trace of the existence of such an elite in Split. Thomas of Split mentions in his *Historia Salonitana* a certain Severus the Great, a citizen of Split and leader of the community, who owned one of the towers of Diocletian's

Palace: TS, ch. 10, 48–51; ch. 11, 54–55. The life of Severus can tentatively be dated to around 650. Another text, composed in the sixteenth century and of dubious authenticity, mentions Severus' grandson (or nephew) in the time of Emperor Theodosios III. Although generally questionable, both sources agree about the dating of the 'Severus dynasty' and might at least be seen as testimony to the existence of such an elite family during the Dark Ages: Budak 2012, 172. Of course, if our dating of Peter's testament is correct, then his father must have been a member of this elite around 750, if not earlier. The same is true of the father of Prior Peter from the sarcophagus (assuming the two Peters are not one and the same person, which is possible).

68 Conant 2012, 284–95. Borri believes with good reason that the *Romani* of the ninth- and tenth-century sources were not defined by their ethnic kinship, but that the term described a new elite which was defined by its maritime activities, accumulated wealth and special relations with the court in Constantinople: Borri 2010, 14.

69 Croatian art historians also use the term 'Renaissance' to describe the new enthusiasm for decorating churches, but they see its sources in the west and term it 'Liutprandian': Basić and Jurković 2011, 176. See also the chapter by Basić in this volume.

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Part V

Pannonia beneath the surface

13   What did the Treaty of Aachen do for the peoples of the Carpathian basin?

Béla Miklós Szőke

The Pannonian campaign of 811

In 805 when the Avar capcan or *princeps Hunorum*, 'a Christian by the name of Theodore', and his people moved 'inter Sabariam et Carnuntum', the khagan let himself be baptized at the Fischa river (*super Fizkaha*), and Charlemagne 'ordered that the khagan, according to the ancient custom of the Huns, was to be lord over the whole kingdom'.[1] After this turbulent year there is little news of the empire's eastern border for quite a time. In 811, the *Annales regni Francorum* reports that Charlemagne held an imperial diet in Aachen after an especially harsh winter and sent armies into three parts of his kingdom. One devastated the land of the Linones, beyond the Elbe; another moved to end a dispute among – or possibly with – the Huns [Avars] and Slavs; the third was dispatched against the Bretons in order to punish them for their disloyalty. All three armies accomplished their tasks successfully, returning in good fortune and without losses. The *Annales* continues:

> Envoys had also arrived at Aachen from Pannonia and waited for him, namely the canizauci, prince of the Avars, and the tudun and other nobles and leaders of the Slavs who live along the Danube. They had been ordered to come before the prince by the commanders of the troops dispatched into Pannonia.[2]

This beginning to 811 is an uncanny reminder of how, eight years earlier, Charlemagne had also sent an army (*scara*) to Pannonia. In 803, the army had managed to penetrate deeper than Charlemagne's previous campaign of 791, and had established such a firm regime in Pannonia that the tudun was not the only one who considered it necessary 'to surrender to the emperor': the Slav and 'Hun' nobles of the 'neighbouring kingdoms' (*finitima regna*) had also decided to subject 'all they possessed' to his rule.[3] As in 803, the campaign of 811 is said to have defeated the entire Avar nobility.[4] However, many Avar dignitaries, including the tudun and the khagan, had surrendered and received baptism as early as 795 and 796, and then again in 803 and 811. Physically they were certainly not eradicated, but since they had become Christian subjects, their sovereign rights would have been diminished and their earlier, free legal status changed: figuratively speaking, they were indeed 'annihilated'.

There are various reasons why the army might have been despatched in 803. They include the events 'ad castellum Guntionis',[5] where the margraves Cadolah and Goteram 'were murdered together with many others';[6] the tudun's sudden change of mind and attempts at self-determination; or even the arrival with the tudun of Slav and Avar nobles at Regensburg. The latter would trigger a lengthy dispute between the Avars and the Slavs, which may already have been underway by 803.

That the years after 803 saw many disputes between the Slavs and Avars is suggested by the move of the capcan and his people in 805, as reported in the *Annales* in 811. Because of these disputes (*ad controversias*) an entire army (*exercitus*) was sent, a far greater force than in 803.[7] After successful pacification, all parties involved were summoned to Aachen, where a new character appears in the narrative: the somewhat mysterious Avar prince (*princeps Avarum*) who is styled *canizauci* and who, from 803 on, seems to have held a higher rank than the tudun and other Avar and Slav nobles.[8]

The *canizauci*: Who was he?

Interpreting the title *canizauci* raises questions which go beyond simple problems of translation. Because the author of the *Annales regni Francorum* chooses to use the term *princeps Avarum*,[9] Walter Pohl has suggested that the *canizauci* was the khagan himself, bearing an *honor antiquus* that had been re-introduced in 805. Listed after him is the tudun, no longer the *princeps* but holding a rank between *princeps Avarum* and 'primores ac duces Sclavorum'.[10] There have been numerous attempts to establish the exact meaning of the word *canizauci* and to identify the person hiding behind this dignity. Perhaps the only point of agreement among the various philological explanations is that it is probably a composite word.[11]

Some theories attribute the word to the Huns, Turks and Uighurs directly, others to the Bulgars on the lower Danube.[12] According to the latter, the proto-Bulgar khan bore the title *κανα συβιγη*, which appears in various inscriptions and which resembles *canizauci*.[13] If *κανα συβιγη* is read as *kana sybige*, it corresponds closely to the title given to Oghuz military commanders, *sübaši/sübeki*; and if it is read as *kanas ybige*, it corresponds to the office of *yabgu*.[14] This explanation has repercussions for interpreting the events surrounding the embassy of 811. Pohl is of the opinion that appropriating a Bulgar princely title was the desperate last fling of the Avar khaganate, an attempt to create a poor imitation of the victorious Khan Krum and to identify with the Bulgar ruler, at least in its relations with the Franks. However, he notes that 'even the adoption of the Bulgarian title of khan did not save the khaganate, favoured by the Franks, from its Slavic enemies'.[15] We cannot go into the philological issues raised by Pohl, but from an historical viewpoint, his supposition that the Avar khagan borrowed the title from his victorious Bulgar counterpart in order to appear more powerful before the Frankish ruler and thus save his khaganate from the hostile Slavs is tenuous – particularly since their leaders participated in one and the same mission to Aachen in 811.

In contrast, Gábor Vékony's philological studies suggest that the origins of the title *canizauci* should be sought in Old Iranian terms.[16] On the basis of links

between the title *canizauci* and that of the Danubian Bulgar ruler, he suggests that 'the Avar khaganate, re-established in 805, declined because it was occupied by the Bulgarians' and that it was Krum himself who appeared before Charlemagne in 811, already bearing the title 'the prince of the Avars'.[17] According to Vékony, Krum launched a campaign against the Avars in 810–811 rather than around 803–805, but while campaigning in Avar territory, he left his home base open to the Byzantines: Nikephoros I (802–811) was even able to enter Pliska, the Bulgar capital. Krum turned back and defeated the Byzantines with the help of the Pannonian Avars, who were loyal to him. He then returned to Pannonia to complete his campaign there. It was the intensification of animosities between the Avars and the Slavs that caused Krum to suffer heavy defeat, since he encountered the Frankish troops dispatched to Pannonia. Krum was thus forced to negotiate in Aachen as the heir and legal successor of Khagan Abraham.[18]

However, the theory that it was Krum who appeared before Charlemagne in 811 is not supported by a detailed breakdown of events. As early as May 811, Nikephoros I had started to rally his troops; with his son Staurakios, he then moved against the Bulgars at the head of a powerful army in late June or early July. Krum sued for peace but was refused, and the Byzantines attacked on 20 July, occupying the Bulgar capital Pliska and taking Krum's palace, plundering both his wine cellar and treasury before withdrawing. At this point Krum had either returned to his homeland or, if he was still distant, he must have hurried back on hearing the news of the Byzantines' withdrawal. The suggestion that, despite this news, he was still far from his border and in the midst of a war against the Avars is unrealistic.

Krum sued for peace a second time and was again refused. So he moved his army in secret and early on Saturday 26 July launched a surprise attack on the Byzantine camp.[19] He first took the tents of the emperor and his nobles, beheading Nikephoros and exhibiting his head for many days on a high pole.[20] Krum's army then drove most of the fleeing Byzantine army into a marshy river, where many patricians, *stratēgoi* and officers perished.

By this time, Krum's army included Avars. It is uncertain what role they played in the struggle against the Byzantines, and whether the Avars were recruited by order of Krum or were mercenaries. Samu Szádeczky-Kardoss thinks that those Avars who lived in the Bulgar-occupied lands would have been mobilized by order, while those who lived beyond, on the upper reaches of the Tisza or in the 'free' territory of Pannonia, would have received payment,[21] although György Györffy disagrees.[22] Stanisław Turlej also highlights the difficulty of the situation facing the Bulgar khan, who was forced to draft Avar and Slav mercenaries – and even women – into his army.[23]

In Vékony's reconstruction, Krum was once again at war in Pannonia by August or September 811. Yet we are asked to believe that the first commander to triumph over a 'Roman' emperor since the battle of Adrianople in 378 then suffered such a heavy defeat at the hands of the Frankish army that he felt obliged to come in person to Aachen to face Charlemagne, who had no idea of his identity.[24] After this, Krum summoned his troops once more and by early 812 was fighting in Bulgaria, occupying first Develtos and then the city of Mesembria, and spreading

such terror that the new emperor, Michael I (811–813), shied away from launching a campaign to avenge his predecessor, Nikephoros I.[25]

Our sources certainly attest a renewal of Byzantino-Frankish contacts at this time. Although Nikephoros I sent an ambassador to Charlemagne in 810 to seek a peace treaty and closer contacts, he only arrived in Aachen in October. By the time the envoy whom Charlemagne sent in return arrived in Constantinople, there was a new emperor, Michael; it was with Michael that negotiations eventually led to Byzantine recognition of Charlemagne as *imperator* and *basileus*.[26] Vasil Gjuzelev agrees with a number of earlier scholars that this recognition of Charlemagne was to a considerable degree motivated by Byzantine fear of the Bulgars.[27] Indeed, early in his reign, the new emperor Leo V the Armenian (813–820) sent a fresh embassy seeking help from the Franks, since Constantinople was under siege by Krum. The envoy reached Charlemagne just before his death on 28 January 814, and so negotiations took place with Louis the Pious, his successor.[28] The sheer scale and intensity of Krum's military and diplomatic demarches in these few years suggest he had ample resources, facilitating transport and siege warfare.[29]

Vékony's reconstruction of events is therefore problematic for several reasons, and Turlej's interpretation of the sources regarding Avar participation seems more convincing. He suggests that they joined Krum's forces willingly, on purely mercenary grounds, and thus witnessed an unprecedented event: the defeat and beheading of the Christian emperor.[30] Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the Avars – who were fighting for survival against the Slavs – would have surrendered to Krum without resistance. Despite his terrifying reputation, Krum proved incapable of permanently conquering broad stretches of the Carpathian basin, although he did gain control over the Avars at the pinnacle of his power between 811 and 814. Krum's military activity, and thus his authority and prestige, dramatically increased after the siege of Versinikia in Thrace. When part of his army then moved against Constantinople, in expectation of rich pickings, it included Avars, but no longer as mercenaries.[31] If we accept the hypothesis that Krum attacked the khaganate after Nikephoros' defeat, then, according to Turlej, we should also question the authenticity of the report on the Avars under the keyword *Bulgaroi* in the *Suidae lexicon*.[32]

In linking the title of *canizauci* with that of the Bulgar ruler and proposing correspondences, scholars tend to overlook another important aspect: namely that the term *canizauci* is the earlier of the two to be mentioned in our sources. The expression *κανα συβηγη* first appears in the title given to Omurtag (*c*. 815–831) and his successor Malamir (831–836).[33] Its use reflects Krum's heightened prestige after the siege of Constantinople, together with his desire for political independence and equality with the Byzantine emperor.[34] It is therefore unlikely that *κανα συβηγη* could have influenced the coining of the title *canizauci* and searching for its origins among the Danubian Bulgars, or even a Bulgar emperor, is anachronistic both historically and philologically.

There is, however, another interpretation of the title *canizauci*. As mentioned earlier (n. 12), Gyula Németh sees it as an Avar princely title that was pronounced

kam-sauču, its first part meaning 'shaman' (*kam*), and the second 'messenger or prophet' (*sauču*).[35] Lajos Ligeti also believes it to be an Avar dignity, whose first part (*qan*) 'unlike the high princely title of bajan, that is *qaγan*, appears prestigious even as late as 811' and, as in Németh's reading, whose second part is the well-known Turkic word for 'messenger' (*sabčĭ, saβčĭ, savčĭ*), thus 'khan's messenger' or 'khagan'. This rank could denote someone in the khagan's confidence, who functioned as his personal envoy in sensitive matters and was probably also a close family member. The *canizauci* could have had the right to bear the title *princeps*, meaning he was above all others in terms of rank.[36] He could be equal in rank, if not identical, to the person who appeared before Charlemagne in 805 as the khagan's ambassador in order to report, for the sake of re-establishing their 'ancient rights', that the khagan had been baptized in the autumn, assuming the name of Abraham.

The use of the title *canizauci* shows that the khagan continued with the full panoply of rulership despite his difficult, even hopeless situation. Within his domain, in his capital, he received the Frankish king's envoys in the Ring (*hring*); or nearby, as in the case of Charlemagne's son Pippin, king of Italy, whom he met in the latter's camp on the banks of the Danube. Although anxious to re-establish his 'ancient rights', the khagan was not willing to appear in person before Charlemagne but chose to send a messenger instead; and when, as a countermove, he received baptism, he did so within his own territory, at the Fischa river. The khagan clearly acted with caution, a wise move given the unstable internal political situation. But his conduct also reflects the pride of his predecessors, who had once threatened both Byzantium and the Merovingian kingdom: the khagan would only cross the borders of his realm as a military chieftain at the head of his army – when it came to negotiating and pleading, he would only send envoys.

The leader of the Avar embassy which appeared in Aachen in 811 was clearly therefore not the khagan, nor the khagan and his heir, nor even the Avar prince appropriating a Bulgar title, let alone the actual title holder himself, the Bulgar khan Krum. Rather, the embassy led by the 'messenger of the khagan' attests the regular functioning of the khaganate, which had accepted the new status quo following from the recent shake-up of relations within the Carpathian basin.

The peace of 811

All the key players from the Carpathian basin were present at Aachen in the autumn of 811, with the *canizauci* representing the khagan. Although he had surrendered to Pippin and received baptism in return for re-establishment of his 'ancient rights', as ruler of the Avar khaganate east of the Danube, the khagan was still the most important force in the region. The *canizauci* was immediately followed by the tudun, the most important Avar dignitary to the west of the Danube. The tudun came to surrender to the Frankish king in person and had been Christian for some time. This was his third visit to the imperial court, since he had also appeared in 796 and 803, and he came partly for the sake of his immediate interests and partly out of duty as a vassal. And lastly, there were the Slav nobles

from the border area of the upper Danube, adjoining the khaganate: 'alii primores ac duces Sclavorum circa Danubium habitantium'.[37]

The vast majority of the participants were Christian and vassals of the Frankish ruler. We may therefore assume that the emperor could count upon any resulting treaty being binding upon all participants as his subjects; and that these pacifying imperial negotiations finally ended the conflicts that had been raging in the Carpathian basin for a decade. The result was a peace based on compromise. Although no contemporary report exists, later events shed some light. Following the Treaty of Aachen, there is no more talk of war between the Avars and the Slavs or between the Franks and either grouping. Clearly, the treaty created a modus vivendi which offered suitable assurances to both Avars and Slavs living north of the Danube: they could now rule over their people freely, on condition that they remain loyal to the Frankish emperor and pay tribute.[38] As the author of the *Conversio* succinctly put it around 870: 'But those who obediently accepted the faith and received baptism were made tributaries of the king [i.e. the Bavarians], while those who remained on their land owe it in return for a tribute paid to the king until the present day'.[39]

The most significant regional consequence of the negotiations and guarantee of an enduring peace was the separation of the area between the Sava and the Danube from the former Avar khaganate, to become a province directly under Carolingian rule: Pannonia(e).[40] The region between the Sava and the Drava, with a centre in Sisak (Siscia), became Pannonia Inferior. It was directly subject to the duke of Friuli as its governor, while ecclesiastically it came under the missionary church of Aquileia.[41] The region between the Drava and the Danube, Pannonia Superior, came under the rule of the Bavarian prefect of the East, Gerold II, and became a missionary district of the church of Salzburg.

When Charlemagne entrusted the two prefects with governing the eastern territories, he did not define their zones and internal borders precisely.[42] At the time of Eric's conquest in 796, of the emergence of Liudewit in 818,[43] and most probably during the peace negotiations of 811, Pannonia Inferior south of the Drava was an autonomous administrative unit before it was subjected to the duke of Friuli and through him to the Italian kingdom.[44] Pannonia Superior north of the Drava has been identified by many as a 'vassal khaganate';[45] from the early ninth century it was incorporated into the Bavarian Eastern March (*plaga orientalis*), together with Carantania.[46]

This situation changed briefly in the 820s, when Baldric, successor to Cadolah as duke of Friuli, fought a war against Liudewit. Baldric penetrated not only Pannonia Superior, an important base for provisioning the army and for campaigning, but also 'into the region of the Carantanians, which was placed under his control', eventually evicting Liudewit's army 'de illa provincia'.[47] It is therefore hardly surprising that in 826, when Louis the Pious sent the Palladian count Bertrich 'ad Baltricum et Geroldum comites et Avarici limitis custodes' in order to get information about the Bulgar situation, the envoy actually travelled 'in Carantanorum provinciam'.[48] At that time, the Bavarian *plaga orientalis* still encompassed only the area from Traungau to the *provintia Avarorum*.[49] The young Bavarian king,

Louis the German, and his uncle Gerold II, the new Bavarian prefect of the East, used the first available opportunity to blame the increasingly powerful Baldric for the success of the Bulgars in moving upstream along the Drava and promptly to replace him.[50]

Conclusion

In view of the subsequent history of the region, this short discussion of the Treaty of Aachen is important for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests that the Avars remained influential players in an era usually viewed in terms of decline and disintegration. Their involvement in the treaty and undisputable role in the re-alignment of the region's political fault lines helped to shape new rules of the game and had a direct bearing on Frankish patterns of domination in subsequent decades.[51] Secondly, although no evidence remains about the treaty's resolutions themselves, the imperial negotiations clearly brought long-standing conflicts to an end and created a modus vivendi in the complex web of relationships among the peoples of the region.

Notes

1 *ARF* s.a. 805, 119–20; trans. *CarCh*, 84; *Annales Sancti Emmerammi Ratisponensis* s.a. 805, 93.
2 'in Pannonias ad controversias Hunorum et Sclavorum finiendas': *ARF* s.a. 811, 133–35; trans. *CarCh*, 94.
3 *Annales mettenses priores* s.a. 803, 89–90.
4 As Einhard would claim twenty years later, in his *Life of Charlemagne*, '[t]ota in hoc bello Hunorum nobilitas periit, tota gloria decidit': *VKM*, 16. Notker repeats this claim around 886 (*Gesta* II.1, 51): '[. . .] ut de eis ne minimas quidem reliquias remanere permiserit'; see also Deér 1965, 768, 783; the chapter by Takács in this volume.
5 The location of the *castellum* is disputed. The fort of *Guntio*(n) has been identified as the one at Kőszeg (Güns) in north-western Hungary, although the arguments are less than convincing; see E. Tóth 1974; Wolfram 1987, 259 n. 26; Pohl 1988, 27; Szádeczky-Kardoss 1998, 302. Judging by the fort's name, it may have been located somewhere towards the eastern edge of the region inhabited by the Bavarians. Péter Váczy (1974, 1056 and n. 57) suggests that the genitive ending indicates a personal name, which is characteristic of the Franks. The bishop of Worms in 872 was called Guntio and featured as Gunzo *missus* in 858. *Guntio*(n) may also be a Latin translation of an Old High German place name, originally **Gunzenburg*.
6 *Annales Sancti Emmerammi Ratisponensis* s.a. 802, 93. Although the location is uncertain, the attackers have been identified by many as Avars. If the fort were close to the Bavarians' lands, this would increase the probability of Avar involvement. But we cannot establish with certainty that the emperor travelled to Bavaria in the autumn of 803, returning to Aachen in December after settling affairs in Pannonia (*Pannoniarum causis*), as is recorded in the *Annales* (*ARF* s.a. 803, 118; *CarCh*, 83).
7 *ARF* s.a. 811, 135. István Bóna argues that it was the reliability of the Avar vassal princes and the loyalty of their khagans that prompted Charlemagne to send imperial troops to protect them from their Slav neighbours in 811: Bóna 1984, 348.
8 Bóna follows the suggestion of Peter Ratkoš that the *canizauci* could be a certain khagan called Isaac: Bóna 1984, 352; Ratkoš 1968, 188.
9 Herwig Wolfram suggests that the *Annales* uses the rank of *princeps Avarum* to denote 'the first among the Avars', since Charlemagne is also termed *princeps* in a similar

context, for example when reporting that the 'duces ad praesentiam principis' who accompanied the Frankish troops had to appear personally before him: Wolfram 1995a, 167,

10 *ASM*, 304–05.

11 With the exception of Géza Nagy, who divides the name into two parts denoting two different honours: *cani* = *κάνας/κανε* from the lower Danube, i.e. the khagan; and *zauci* = *zauk, zavuk/jabgu*, the Bulgaro-Hunnic variant of the Altaic Turkic *jabgu*, a double honour held by both the ruler and the heir to the throne within the same kin group. In contrast, the term 'tudun' originated from a different root: Nagy 1907, 332.

12 Gyula Németh interprets *canizauci~camzanci* as *kam-saučy*, *kam* meaning 'shaman' and *saučy~savčy* 'messenger' or 'prophet': Németh 1930, 104.

13 See the examples in Zoltán Gombocz, who notes that the term for the Bulgar khan is always used attributively, e.g. *κάνας υβηγη Ὠμονρτάγ* or *κανες υβηγη Μαλαμήρ*, and interprets it as a Bulgar form of the Old Turkic *ädgü*, 'good, preserved': Gombocz 1960, 26.

14 According to Gyula Moravcsik, *υβιγί* was a title or attribute which always appeared after *κανάς* in the title of ninth-century Danubian Bulgar rulers: Moravcsik 1983, 330. For this he draws on Veselin Beshevliev's argument that the second element in the well-known proto-Bulgarian compound title had the Greek ending – *ς*. Thus the correct separation should be *κανα συβιγη* and the second word *sübigi-* or *šübigi*. He equates this to the Turkic – more precisely, Iranian or Tokharian – *jabgu-*, making the meaning ' "*συβιγη* der Khane" oder "Khan, der im Range eines *συβιγη* steht" ': Beshevliev 1963, 249, 250–51. In this, he agrees with Nagy (above, n. 11). *Jabgu* was the official dignity of the western Turkic ruler and was adopted by their former subjects, the Bulgars, now the leading grouping in the region, and used much later as an expression of their rulers' power and significance: Beshevliev 1963, 251.

15 *ASM*, 304–05.

16 These terms include *qan-äsivyī* (Vékony 1981, 78); *qan äsivgii* (Vékony 1984, 68); and *kanesivgi* (Vékony 1997, 1158).

17 Vékony 1997, 1158.

18 Vékony 1981, 78.

19 Szádeczky-Kardoss (1983, 207 n. 14) considers the few days allowed by Theophanes too short a period for such a measure. See also the chapter by Ziemann in this volume.

20 Exhibiting the severed head of a defeated enemy on a pole, especially that of a rebel or dethroned emperor, was a Byzantine custom which dates back to the ancient past: Beshevliev 1962, 18–19. Krum eventually had a silver-coated chalice made out of Nikephoros' skull. This practice is mentioned in several sources, including Herodotus' description of the Scyths (Herodotus IV.26). Paul the Deacon recounts the tale of Alboin, who had a cup (*scala*) made out of the skull of the Gepid king Cunimund; some years later, Alboin forced his wife Rosamund, who was also Cunimund's daughter, 'to drink merrily with her father [i.e. out of his skull]': Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, I.27, 69; II.28, 87–89. It was also a sign of veneration to cast cups of gem-encrusted gold from the skulls of certain Christian saints, such as St Theodata or St Sebastian: Schulz 2004; Beshevliev 1962, 20–21.

21 Szádeczky-Kardoss 1983, 207 n. 15.

22 György Györffy (1984, 588) believes that 'against the land of the Bulgars, empowered by the Avars, nobody was left to be mobilized, and Byzantium was powerless against the Bulgar attacks'.

23 Turlej 2007, 42. See also Pohl 2006, 144.

24 When the embassy of Khan Omurtag approached the Carolingian court early in 824, the reaction of the Frankish ruler to their appearance would certainly have been different had he really encountered Krum in Aachen thirteen years earlier: *ARF* s.a. 824, 164. In fact, only in 812, when the embassy returned from Constantinople with the news of

the death of the Byzantine emperor, do we have the first mention of the Bulgars in the *Annales*: 'Niciforus imperator [. . .] cum Bulgaris proelio moritur' (*ARF* s.a. 812, 136). See also Schwarcz 2000, 101; the chapter by Ziemann in this volume.

25 Theoph., 496; *CTC*, 679; Beshevliev 1981, 240–49, with detailed references to the sources. See also Turlej 2007, 43–46.

26 In 812, Charlemagne once again received Byzantine ambassadors in Aachen, including Bishop Michael and the *prōtospatharioi* Arsaphios and Theognostos, who styled him thus: *ARF* s.a. 812, 136.

27 Gjuzelev 1966, 24.

28 *ARF* s.a. 814, 140–41; *Annales Laurissenses minores* s.a. 814, 122; Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 'Chronicon Laurissense breve' V.1, 38. See also I. Tóth 1977, 42; Beshevliev 1963, 261; Classen 1965, 605; Ostrogorsky 1968, 201; Turlej 2007, 33–34.

29 For the realities of travel and campaigning at this time, see *OEE*; Halsall 2003, 134–62.

30 '[. . .] in 811 they served in Krum's army in exchange for money (μισθωσάμενοι), which indicates that they could have been independent': Turlej 2007, 51.

31 'Hludowihus habuit Kalendis Augusti mensis, et legati Graecorum auxilium petebant ab eo contra Bulgares et caeteras barbaras gentes': *Annales Laurissenses minores* s.a. 814, 122.

32 Turlej 2007, 54; *SL*, vol. 1, 483–84; trans. Kiril Galev <www.stoa.org/sol-entries/beta/423> (accessed 14 June 2016); for this passage, see above 84–85.

33 Examples in Gombocz 1960, 26. Beshevliev (1963) interprets these as +Κα(ν)α συβιγη Ωμο(μο)ρταγ (Nr. 55, 247); Κανα συβιγι Ομουρταγ (Nr. 56, 260); and Κανα συβηγη Μαλαμηρ (Nr. 57, 277).

34 Beshevliev 1963, 251.

35 Ligeti 1986, 144; this is also the opinion of Péter Tomka (1971, 250 n. 88)

36 The *princeps Avarum* appearing in the *Annales* (*ARF* s.a. 811, 135) is probably a corrupt variant of *princeps Avarorum* (ruler of the Avars), and he is correctly referred to as *capcanus, princeps Hunorum* (ruler of the Huns) in the *Annales* s.a. 805 (*ARF*, 119).

37 *Annales Laurissenses minores* s.a. 811, 119.

38 Josef Deér sees this compromise and the establishment of Slav and Avar areas as at the heart of the peace reached: Deér 1965, 778.

39 'Eos autem, qui obediebant fidei et baptismum sunt consecuti, tributarios fecerunt regum et terram, quam possident residui, adhuc pro tributo retinent regis usque in hodiernum diem:' *Conversio Bagoariorum*, ch. 3, ed. and trans. Lošek, 102–03; ed. Wolfram, 40. On the question of location, see Ratkoš 1968, 189; Wolfram 1987, 275; Boba 2005, 169.

40 Deér argues that the division from the khaganate was along ethnic lines, for example, the separation of the old duchies of Moravia and Croatia. However, this does not preclude other economic or administrative aspects having played an important role in the case of Pannonia: Deér 1965, 778.

41 Wolfram 1995b, 225.

42 Herwig Wolfram explicitly draws attention to the fact that expressions such as 'prefect' or 'prefecture' appear neither in charters nor in the capitulars: 'Da jedoch die Bezeichnung die übergeordnete Position dieses Grafen trefflich veranschaulicht, soll von nun an allgemein und ohne Anführungszeichen von Präfekten, insbesondere von Präfekten des (bayerischen) Ostlandes die Rede sein, während der bis 828 zuständige Leiter des friulanischen Teils der Awarenmark der Herzog von Friaul ist und auch so genannt wird' (Wolfram 1995a, 304).

43 'Liudewiti, ducis Pannoniae inferioris [. . .]': *ARF* s.a. 818, 149.

44 For a different opinion, see Bóna 1985, 152.

45 *Conversio Bagoariorum* ch. 10, ed. and trans. Lošek, 118–23; ed. Wolfram, 50; Sós 1973, 22. However István Bóna's argument that Pannonia Inferior, between the Drava and the Sava, was inhabited primarily by Slavs, whereas Pannonia Superior, to the west

of the line between Carnuntum and Sabaria, or Transdanubia, was primarily inhabited by Avars, is supported neither by our written sources nor by archaeological findings: Bóna 1984, 348; Bóna 1985, 152. See also Szőke 2000.

46 See the phrase in the *Ordinatio imperii 817 mense Iulio*, in which Louis the Pious sets the borders for the parts of the empire to be inherited by his son, Louis the German: 'Baioaria et Carentani et Beheimi et Avari atque Sclavi qui ab orientali parte Baioariae sunt:' *Ordinatio imperii 817 mense Iulio*, 271. For Carantania, see *Conversio Bagoariorum*, ed. Wolfram, 121: 'Man hat aber nicht ein Eindruck, daß dieses 811 auch politisch geteilt wurde, zumal eine solche Maßnahme die Rechte der karantanischen Duces geschmälert hätte, ohne daß ein Grund dafür bekannt wäre'.

47 'in Carantanorum regionem, quae ad ipsius curam pertinebat': *ARF* s.a. 819, 151. On the notion of *cura*, see *Conversio Bagoariorum*, ed. Wolfram, 121; see also Wolfram 1987, 269; Wolfram 1995a, 308.

48 *ARF* s.a. 826, 169.

49 Mitterauer 1963, 5–7; Mühlberger 1980, 61.

50 Bóna 1985, 152; Wolfram 1995b, 190.

51 Scepticism about the ideas of Wolfram, Dopsch and Pohl makes Helmut Reimitz state that 'Der "Verlust der Awaren" war damit auch ein Verlust der entscheidenden Ansatzpunkte für die gedankliche Aneignung des Raumes und die Etablierung von Herrschaftsstrukturen in ihm. [. . .] Mit den grossen, oft unterschiedlichen Erwartungen, die dabei geformt und gebündelt wurden, entstanden Bedingungen und Regeln, die teilweise die Anwendung erprobter Muster der Etablieru[n]g fränkischer Herrschaft gerade in diesem Raum behinderten': Reimitz 2000, 166.

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14 Lower Pannonia before and after the Treaty of Aachen

Hrvoje Gračanin

Introduction

We can be fairly sure – at least by the standards of early medieval history – that the Franks' expansion into the region between the Danube and the Adriatic had a profound effect on the socio-political circumstances of the region's peoples. Admittedly, this assumption rests on a weak base, since we know little about the previous period: the extant evidence allows us only a few glimpses of the historical processes at work in the region before the arrival of the Franks. It is as if the two-centuries-long Avar sway more or less froze the region in time. Undoubtedly this impression is wrong, but we have little to tell us exactly how societies in the region developed, and to what extent they may have already been affected by external influences during the seventh and eighth centuries. Here the archaeological record, as well as anthropological and forensic evidence, may be of use: artefacts and osteological remains can be instructive about everyday living conditions, burial customs, what was deemed to be of particular communal or personal value, and even how groups and individuals formed their social identity or defined their social status. But they cannot really help explain complex socio-political and economic processes.

Even our written evidence is practically non-existent before the late eighth and the early ninth centuries. One obvious reason is that the Avars never felt in need of a developed written culture. Another, equally debilitating, reason is that the region between the Danube and the Adriatic had for quite some time been a sort of a double periphery: there was no interest or ability in either the west or the east to record events in the former Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia during the seventh and eighth centuries. Furthermore, the surviving post-Roman communities on the eastern Adriatic were too insignificant to attract external attention, as well as being too small and too weak to deal with anything beyond their own affairs. The story of those affairs is, in any case, preserved only fragmentarily, and in much later traditions.

This would change with the advent of the Franks, and Pannonia and Dalmatia would once more become, to a degree, interesting to outside observers. The region between the rivers Sava, Drava and Danube, with which our overview is concerned, was caught up in the struggle between the Franks and Avars and

underwent significant socio-political changes, although essentially it remained an in-between zone, especially after the collapse of Duke Liudewit's revolt. One must, however, stress that, despite our Frankish writers' new-found interest in the region, extant written evidence is fragmentary at best. The same can be said of the archaeological evidence, which is still very far from being enough to fill the gaps in our knowledge or provide new insights. The inadequacy of both the narrative and the material sources presents a methodological problem not easily overcome. That said, it is also true that there are some firm points upon which to base a reconstruction, at least in general outline, of the main historical processes in operation in ninth-century Pannonia.

This chapter has two aims: firstly, to offer a brief narrative of events in southern Pannonia in the decades before and after 812 and to provide as coherent a picture as possible of its political history then. Our focus will be on the new political conditions that followed the Franks' encroachment and the overthrow of the Avar khaganate; on the establishment of a new polity between the rivers Sava, Drava and Danube under Frankish tutelage, serving their overall strategic interests; and on the clash between the recently formed Slav elite under Duke Liudewit of Lower Pannonia and his Frankish overlords. Within this framework, special attention is given to the questions of whether Frankish-Byzantine relations influenced the Franks' politico-military strategy in the region, and the extent to which Duke Liudewit's conspiring with Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado (who eventually turned out as pro-Byzantine) may have been construed by the Frankish authorities as a potential threat to their overall position in the region between the Adriatic and the Danube. Our second aim is to present and contextualize the existing archaeological evidence that indicates an influx of Frankish influence, sparse as it may be. In this respect, one may note that, given the present level of knowledge, there is no clear break in the customs and traditions of the material culture between the periods of Avar rule and Frankish domination in Pannonia.

Historical narrative

The Frankish thrust into the central Danube region was a natural consequence of their expansion into areas to the east of the Rhine and in northern Italy. The central Danube basin opened up as a theatre of action for the Franks when, in 787–788, the duchy of Bavaria was finally subdued and absorbed into the *Regnum Francorum*.[1] Around this time, and definitely before 791, the Franks occupied Byzantine-held Istria.[2] In 791, the Franks invaded Avar territory. The southern Frankish army seems to have advanced along the old Roman road from Aquileia to Poetovio by way of Emona, before moving along the southern bank of the Drava and thus entering the 'Pannonia' of the *Annals of Lorsch*.[3] In the Drava basin the Franks may have encountered an Avar stronghold, a fortified settlement enclosed by a defensive rampart. Archaeological investigations have revealed a significant concentration of Avar-Age finds in the Drava basin around Varaždin, Ludbreg and Koprivnica. There are also stray finds of weaponry in the vicinity of Koprivnica, dated to the late eighth and the early ninth centuries. Of these a sabre,

a long fighting knife and several axes have been attributed to the Avars and Slavs, while two winged lances and a scramasax are of Frankish provenance. These finds may provide support for the assumption that this was perhaps the area where the Avar fortification which the southern Frankish army took by force was situated.[4]

The final blows to Avar rule in the region between the rivers Sava, Drava and Danube, and consequently in the whole of Pannonia, were dealt by two expeditions, the first in the autumn of 795 and the second in the summer of 796. In both cases the Frankish armies moved through southern Pannonia, presumably along the ancient Roman road through the Drava and Danube basins.[5] Having subdued southern Pannonia, the Franks may have organized the area into a vassal principality called Lower Pannonia by 803. Our Frankish sources all start referring to Pannonia in plural form when describing events relating to the year 803, which may indicate that this organizational change was already in place by then.[6] In any case, this is consistent with the system established by the Franks throughout their frontier areas: they relied not only on their own border regions (marches) but also on dependent polities ruled by local princes.[7] The duke of Lower Pannonia, who presumably resided in Sisak, was directly subject to the duke of Friuli, whose jurisdiction extended, in the early ninth century, as far as the middle and lower Drava.

The principality of Lower Pannonia seems to have encompassed the entire region between the Drava, Sava and Danube, stretching from the river Sutla and the Gorjanci-Žumberak mountains in the west to the mouth of the Sava, where it discharges into the Danube in the east.[8] This much can be deduced from our written sources. In Paulinus of Aquileia's poem on Duke Eric of Friuli, Sirmium is mentioned as one of the places under the duke's control.[9] Much later, as recorded by Niketas Choniates in the early 1200s, the Byzantines knew the region of Syrmia as 'the Frankish land' (*Phrangochōrion*): this may either reflect local memory of Frankish rule, passed on to the Byzantines, or the significant presence of a new Germanic population – or possibly both.[10] We know from the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* that the Bavarians settled the Slav *dux* Pribina and his people in northern Pannonia, and that he was given rule over the area to the north of the Drava – and possibly to a limited extent also to the south.[11] And there were always people ready to colonize frontier areas of their own volition: such frontiersmen (*confin(i)ales*) would establish themselves as part of the frontier defences and, like any other freemen, had to do military service and provide specific guard and reconnaissance duties.[12] Present-day Fruška Gora, known in antiquity as *Alma mons*, still preserves the memory of the Franks in its name, since it is usually thought to be a Slavic rendering of the Latin *mons Francorum*.[13] We should certainly allow for the possibility that such references to the Franks are the result of a much later influx of Germanic immigrants in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, colonists from the west invited into their lands by the Hungarian kings.[14] However, it is equally possible that they evoke memories of a Frankish presence dating as far back as the ninth century. The archaeological evidence to corroborate this presence is unfortunately still negligible, apart from the isolated find of a belt assemblage in the present-day village of Zemun Polje (near Zemun)

in the far south-east of Syrmia, dating from the late eighth or early ninth century; its decorative motifs show Christian influence, usually explained by the arrival of Frankish rule.[15] Furthermore, subsequent Frankish contacts with the Timociani and the Obodrites (*Praedenecenti*) may also suggest that the Franks controlled the middle course of the Danube up to the mouth of the Sava.[16]

As noted, the establishment of Frankish rule in the central Danube basin was a natural consequence of Frankish expansion and may have served several aims. First and foremost, the expansionist move against the Avar khaganate aimed at securing their eastern frontier, but may also have been directed at strengthening the Franks' position in the wider region. Byzantino-Frankish hostilities broke out in 788, and shortly afterwards the Franks seized Istria from the Byzantines. Relations between the two empires continued to deteriorate, and it may be that the attack on the Avars was a pre-emptive strike to forestall similar action by the Byzantines in the future or, better yet, to prevent the Byzantines from attracting the Avars to join them against the Franks. That there may have been a real danger from such a development can be seen from the fate of Duke Eric. He was killed in an ambush near present-day Rijeka in 799, apparently staged by the inhabitants of Tarsatica but probably due to Byzantine machinations.[17] The Frankish occupation of the Avar khaganate may also have served as a barrier to future expansion from any other power in the region, notably the Bulgars (assuming that Charlemagne and his advisors were well informed about the situation in south-eastern Europe). In the 790s, the Bulgars were increasingly a force to be reckoned with, as is shown by the outcome of their clashes with the Byzantines.[18] Moreover, the conquest of Avar-held Pannonia brought under Frankish sway a large portion of territory once belonging to the Roman empire, thus giving more substance to Charlemagne's claim of *renovatio imperii Romani*, which eventually resulted in his assumption of the imperial title in 800. Finally, such a thrust into the central Danubian basin gave the Franks the opportunity to deepen and intensify their policy towards regional groups of Slavs. This was all the more important, since good relations with the Slavs had proved of considerable value in the Franks' repeated attempts to pacify the Saxons; they might have expected similar support from the Slavs based on the central Danube and the Adriatic against Byzantium.

The provisions of the Treaty of Aachen in 812 presumably covered Pannonia, and it may even be that Frankish rule in the region was at least tacitly recognized by the Byzantines. We can assume that the first two decades of this rule saw profound changes in the social structure of the region and the emergence of a new elite enjoying the support of the Franks. The archaeological evidence suggests that there were members of local Slav groupings in Frankish service and that they had themselves buried with weapons and military equipment of Frankish provenance (for find sites, see Map 8 on xxxi).[19]

We may also assume that missionaries regularly visited the region, bringing the Christian faith back to the local populations, as had been agreed at a synod held on the banks of the Danube in 796.[20] A demarcation line separating the two missionary areas of Aquileia and Salzburg had already been set up along the Drava in the same year, and was confirmed by Charlemagne in 803 and again in 811.[21]

The ultimate success of the Aquileian mission is confirmed by the Gospel Book of Cividale, which records the names of pilgrims from the principality of Lower Pannonia, undoubtedly members of the new elite.[22] To be sure, the re-Christianization of the region does not mean that Christian worship had ceased altogether when the Avars occupied Pannonia. The Christian faith had lived on in the region. The acts of the synod in 796 mention *clerici inlitterati* or *idiotae*, who maintained some sort of Christian cult for the indigenous populations during the Avar period; but the ecclesiastical organization ceased to exist and was brought back to life only with Frankish rule.

In any case, Frankish influence may be seen as instrumental in giving rise to a south Pannonian Slav elite, and also in establishing favourable preconditions for the formation of an ethnic identity around a local polity created under their patronage.[23] This was something the Avars were not prepared to allow and even tried to forestall – all the more resolutely, we may assume, in light of their experience with the 'Sermesianoi' in the late seventh century.[24] However, the process was abruptly checked after the dismal failure of Duke Liudewit's revolt. What caused this revolt – the single best-known event in the history of ninth-century southern Pannonia[25] – can only be surmised, but several factors seem to have been in play, the penetration of the Frankish socio-political system being the common denominator. In 818 Liudewit, duke of Lower Pannonia, complained to Louis the Pious about the cruelty and arrogance of the Frankish border governor Cadolah, duke of Friuli. This complaint has echoes of similar complaints raised by the inhabitants of Frankish Istria against Duke John and recorded in much detail in the Plea of Rižana of 804.[26] It is also possible that Cadolah tried to privilege new men, over whom Liudewit could not exercise as much control as he wanted, or whom he saw as a potential threat to his own position within the principality. Liudewit may also have sought greater autonomy or even to create a virtually independent polity, only loosely under Frankish suzerainty, much as Bavaria had been in the eighth century. It may be that personal motives were also at work in Liudewit's decision to rebel, namely rivalry with the duke of Dalmatia, Borna. The fact that Cadolah was in no hurry to fix the boundaries between the Dalmatian Slavs and towns of the *Romanoi* on the coast – as the Treaty of Aachen would seem to have prescribed – implies that Borna found favour with Cadolah, since such an adjustment would necessarily have been at the expense of Borna's people.

Duke Liudewit's uprising was crushed after a prolonged struggle: ten Frankish forces were involved in suppressing the rebel and his allies, and they employed a scorched-earth strategy. The outcome was no surprise, despite the somewhat dramatic description of the revolt by our Frankish narrative sources as the *Liudewiticum bellum* and of Liudewit himself as *tyrannus*.[27] What is surprising is the fact that Liudewit ventured to challenge Frankish might in the first place: he must have been aware from the start that his own resources could not match the Franks', especially in the long run. There seems little doubt that Liudewit attempted a full-scale rebellion. However, he would have been a very poor politician and an imprudent military leader had he counted solely on local forces. The only other power in the region that could effectively counter the Franks was Byzantium,

notwithstanding the recent understanding reached at Aachen, and it may be that Liudewit raised the banner of rebellion in expectation of concrete help from Constantinople. That there may have been at least some contacts, possibly even some sort of Byzantine promise of support, can be deduced from the fact that the by now pro-Byzantine patriarch of Grado, Fortunatus, encouraged and aided Liudewit in his struggle against the Franks. But it soon became clear that the Byzantines were not capable of providing any tangible help: they had their own battles to fight with another flare-up of iconoclasm and, far more importantly and debilitatingly, the rebellion of Thomas the Slav in 820. This effectively paralysed the imperial government for a full three years.[28] Such inability on the part of the Byzantines to act when circumstances seemed favourable for challenging Frankish dominance in Dalmatia and Pannonia may have been why Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos blamed Michael II (820–829), the emperor at the time of Liudewit's revolt, for the total collapse of Byzantine influence on the eastern Adriatic coast and the Slav lands of the western Balkans.[29]

The resolute action taken by the Franks against Liudewit in 820 and 821 may to some extent be explained by their concern that the Byzantines would use any apparent weakness in dealing with this revolt to undermine the Frankish position in the region. Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado's escape to Byzantine territory in Zadar in the autumn of 821, after being exposed as a traitor to the Frankish cause, may have convinced the Franks that they were right to suspect the Byzantines of being ready and willing to take advantage of Liudewit's revolt to destabilize Frankish dominance in the region between the Adriatic and the Danube. It may even be that Fortunatus' subsequent rendition was by way of making up for the Byzantines' role in Liudewit's revolt, minor as it turned out to be.[30]

Archaeological narrative

As already noted, our archaeological evidence for the influx of Frankish influence and the rise of new socio-economic conditions is meagre, but instructive nevertheless. Some artefacts indicating Frankish influence may have arrived in the region even before the Frankish conquest, since it is known from our literary sources that the Avars had been exchanging embassies with the Franks from 782 on, and commercial and cultural contacts are likely to have started even earlier. The spread of elements of Frankish material culture undoubtedly received a much stronger stimulus after the establishment of Frankish rule in the region, when the local population adopted military equipment of Carolingian provenance as symbols of social status and a new political identity. Some artefacts may even be remnants of the wars against the Avars and Duke Liudewit: this was when Frankish armies poured into the region between the Sava, Drava and Danube, possibly leaving traces of their activities. Archaeological remains from the early Carolingian era have been found across southern Pannonia, with the majority of finds from the western part of the region. Our overview of sites and finds can be seen in Table 14.1. It should be noted that items 9, 13 and 14 cannot be dated to the early Carolingian era with certainty.

Table 14.1 Overview of early Carolingian finds in Lower Pannonia (see Map 8)

	Locality	Site	Finds	Date
1.	Bojna[31]	Brekinjova Kosa	Early medieval building (possibly a church) containing graves of the same era. Two Carolingian deluxe spurs with decorated fastenings, a gold coin of Constantine V (741–775), a semiprecious stone pendant mounted with gold, an iron knife, gold thread (possibly from a mantle) and parts of a funeral cloth found in the southern grave. The excavated portion of the cemetery contains in total 21 graves. A silver spur from the Carolingian period, with silver fastenings, has been found in a grave located just south-east of the early medieval building	788–852 (Carbon-14 dating)
2.	Brestovac Požeški (west of Požega)[32]	Brestovac Požeški	Gold pieces of a belt assemblage and the iron strap-end of a Carolingian sword scabbard	Early ninth century
3.	Cirkovljan (near Prelog)[33]	Diven Gravel Pit	K-type double-edged iron sword and a teardrop stirrup, probably from a looted grave	c. 800
4.	Duga Resa[34]	River Mrežnica	Iron-winged spearhead (Westphal type III)	Late eighth/early ninth century
5.	Dugo Selo[35]	Unknown (reportedly the northern slopes of Martin Breg)	Iron-winged spearhead (Westphal type II)	c. 800
6.	Đurđevac[36]	Medvedička	Grave find of a double-edged iron sword (apparently Geibig Combination Type 5, Variants I and IV), with repoussé decorated hilt and damascened blade. Other finds made out of archaeological context include an iron battle axe with a hammer; a small knife; and a Carolingian-type bronze, fire-gilded strap-end (with Insular animal decoration in Tassilo Chalice style)	c. 800

Table 14.1 (Continued)

	Locality	Site	Finds	Date
7.	Koprivnica[37]	Jagnjeđe Gravel Pit	Two iron-winged spearheads, probably from looted graves	c. 800
		Šoderica Gravel Pit (near Botovo/Drnje)[38]	Several battle axes, an iron sabre and a long scramasax, probably from looted graves	c. 800
8.	Nartski Novaki (near Dugo Selo)[39]	Nartski Novaki (reportedly a gravel pit on the right bank of the river Sava; archaeological context unclear)	Francisca-type battle axe	Second half of the fifth/early sixth century
			Three battle axes, iron tools and an awl (from a possible hoard)	Eighth to tenth century
9.	Ozalj[40]	Stari Grad	Iron spur	Undetermined (possibly ninth century)
10.	Prelog[41]	Šljunčara	Arrowheads; horse bits; stirrups; eight 'Danubian-type' pottery vessels; an iron battle axe; small knives; and a long scramasax, from looted graves	c. 800
11.	Sisak[42]	Unknown	Small battle axe with Frankish features and bilaterally widened blades (possibly francisca-type) and pieces of spur fittings with Carolingian features	c. 800
12.	Sremska Mitrovica[43]	Grgurevci-Šuljam on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora mountain	Iron-winged spearhead	Assumed to be ninth century

No.	Site	Location	Finds	Date
13.	Torčec[44]		Battle axe with Frankish features (possibly francisca-type)	Undetermined
14.	Tovarnik[45]	Banovci	Sword with Carolingian features	Undetermined (possibly ninth century)
15.	Varaždin[46]	Stari Grad	Iron-winged spearhead (Westphal type III)	Late eighth/early ninth century
16.	Zagreb[47]	Kruge	Long scramasax; riding gear (stirrups, horse bits and sheet-metal reinforcers); three bronze quadrangular buckles; a small iron knife; iron fragments; a bone reinforcing plate for a composite bow; a sharp bony tip; and a cast bronze strap-end with tendril ornamentation from the burial of a human with horse	Late eighth century
17.	Zagreb[48]	Podsused Hill (below Susedgrad Fort)	Warrior grave with belt fittings and double-edged K-type sword with five-lobed pommel	First half of the ninth century
18.	Zemun[49]	Zemun Polje	Gilded bronze belt assemblage with strap-ends and fasteners; two bronze hairpins; three glass paste beads; a hand-made pot; and an iron battle axe from a male grave	c. 800

Finds of Abbasid coins may also be taken as indicators of the opening up of communication routes in the region between the Sava, Drava and Danube in the twilight of the Avar khaganate. The hoard of Abbasid dinars struck by Caliphs al-Saffah (749–754) or al-Mansur (754–775), al-Mahdi (775–785) and Harun al-Rashid (786–809) discovered at Donji Petrovci in Syrmia testifies to long-distance trade. Their deposition may have been due to the Avar-Frankish wars in the late eighth century, since the coins seem not to have circulated for long before being deposited.[50] The most recent piece is dated to 788–789,[51] which has led some scholars to conclude that the coins were buried in the ground around 790.[52] Along with the coins, Byzantine-style jewellery of the late Avar period has also been discovered in the hoard.[53] So if the owner concealed his treasure because of wartime uncertainties, a somewhat later deposition date is more likely. On the other hand, the hoard may have been created for savings purposes. Besides the Donji Petrovci hoard, there are several other stray finds of Arab coins: single dinars found at Gradište Bekteško on the southern slopes of Mount Krndija; at Opatovac (near Sotin); in the vicinity of Zemun; and two dinars from Sremska Mitrovica. All of these were struck in the caliphate of al-Mahdi.[54] Three are pierced (those from Opatovac, Sremska Mitrovica and near Zemun), which shows that they were used as jewellery. What may seem odd is that only gold dinars have been found in the region, and not a single silver dirham. This may imply that the dinars were primarily set aside as savings. In any case, the Arab coins would indicate that local trade-routes were now operational again.

The finds of several iron axes from Sotin and Vukovar, in the region of the Danube, and from Zbjeg (south-west of Slavonski Brod) in the region of the Sava, may also belong to the late eighth and the early ninth centuries.[55] To these may be added several axes found in the area of Sisak and dated to around 800.[56] Stray finds of axes that might belong to the late Avar period have been discovered in the vicinity of Koprivnica[57] and Torčec[58] in the region of the Drava; and several iron axes have also been recovered from the river Sava at Bosanska Rača, south-west of Sremska Mitrovica, but their date is undetermined.[59] Whether these finds are connected to the Avar-Frankish wars or the war against Duke Liudewit cannot be said with certainty, but it may at least be hypothesized where the finds did not originally form part of a grave assemblage.[60] However, where the finds lack a clear archaeological context, interpretation is almost impossible, although their location in the Drava, Danube and Sava basins would certainly fit into our general picture of fighting along the main river routes, that is near suitable river crossings: it is well known that the Franks made use of riverways as convenient corridors for advancing troops.[61] Archaeological remains of the early Carolingian era have also been found at sites on the right bank of the Sava, in modern Bosnia and Herzegovina. From Petoševci near Laktaši (the site of the Bagruša necropolis) comes a stirrup of an early Carolingian type dated to the ninth century.[62] An iron spearhead and an iron spur of Frankish provenance have been found in Kočićevo (formerly Junuzovci) near Bosanska Gradiška[63] and Prijedor respectively,[64] both probably dating from the ninth century.

There are two finds of Frankish provenance that may deserve special atten-tion. First is the francisca-type battle axe from Nartski Novaki (near Dugo Selo), which actually dates from the fifth or early sixth century, but has traditionally been assumed to form part of a possible hoard – together with three other battle axes, iron tools and an awl – dating broadly to the eighth to tenth centuries.[65] More recently, however, the francisca-type battle axe has been dissociated from this possible later hoard and ascribed to a Germanic presence in sixth-century south-ern Pannonia.[66] There are two other finds of battle axes, from Sisak and Torčec respectively, believed to have francisca-type features; but the unclear archaeologi-cal context makes it difficult to confirm their provenance. However, rather than being seen as testimony to a Germanic presence, the find of at least one and pos-sibly three francisca-type battle axes may be explained by contacts the Avars had with the Franks in the second half of the sixth century.

The second find of Frankish provenance is a winged spearhead from the river Kupa (near Lasinjska Kiselica), presumably found on the site of an old river ford. It is dated to the first half of the eighth century and thought either to have been brought to the area by a Frankish soldier or to have been lost by a Slav warrior fighting for the Franks against the Avars.[67] If the spear had been used over two generations, as has also been suggested, it may possibly be connected to the time of Duke Liudewit's rebellion.[68] However, attention has been drawn to the practice of the votive deposition of spears.[69] Neither of the proposed hypotheses can be substantiated and the question remains open as to how the spear ended up in this area and in the river. It may even be that it was loot from one of the Avar cam-paigns in the west in the first half of the eighth century, for instance, from the bor-der clashes with the Bavarians and the Carantanians in 713–714 and 741–742.[70]

Conclusion

On balance, we can draw one general conclusion from the archaeological record: Frankish rule in southern Pannonia facilitated the rise of a new warrior elite, whose members had themselves buried with military equipment of Carolingian provenance. It is believed that the owner of a double-edged iron sword and a teardrop stirrup from Cirkovljan (near Prelog) was probably a distinguished local Slav warrior in Frankish service, who was deliberately buried apart from the nearby Avar-Slav necropolis; the idea was to emphasize his association with the new elite, which owed their status to their Carolingian overlords.[71] The owner of another double-edged iron sword from Medvedička (near Đurđevac) is simi-larly thought to have been a member of the Slav elite who was in the service of the March of Friuli.[72] The same, then, may be concluded for the owners of iron spears from the gravel pit at the Jagnjeđe site (near Koprivnica).[73] The practice of leaving weapons with the dead had a clear social function. In ninth-century southern Pannonia after the destruction of the Avar khaganate, the appearance in local graves of elements of Carolingian military equipment indicates that some saw their chance in adapting to the new political situation and to advance socially

by adopting a new allegiance and identity. The members of this newly created, or merely refashioned, elite detached themselves from those who seem to have preferred to cling to old identities and ways, such as the people buried in the Avar-Slav graveyards in Prelog or at the Kruge site in Zagreb. That this political conversion or re-invention brought many benefits is self-evident, but there may be more telling testimony: the Brestovac Požeški 'treasure' could easily have belonged to a member of this new south Pannonian Slav elite, who owed his promotion to the Franks.[74]

Notes

1 Wolfram 1995, 338–44.
2 *FiF*, 199–200. In terms of chronology, it is worth stressing that no Istrian bishops are recorded as attending the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which may or may not be the result of the rise of Frankish influence in the region. The matter is surely open for debate.
3 It is presumably the area around Poetovio which the *Annals of Lorsch* understands as 'Illyricum': *Annales Laureshamenses* s.a. 791, 34–35. See also *ASM*, 316; Bowlus 1995, 49 (who omits the duke of Friuli).
4 Gračanin 2011, 151.
5 *ASM*, 319; Bowlus 1995, 55–56. Béla Miklós Szőke (2011, 282) believes that the Franks moved along the Sava, but it is more likely that the main strike force marched down the Drava. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that there had also been some fighting in the Sava area (see below, 228–29).
6 *ARF*; Einhard, *Annales* s.a. 803, 191; *VKM*, 17–18; Poeta Saxo, *Annales* V.195, 270.
7 Goldberg 2006, 119.
8 Gračanin 2011, 153–55.
9 Paulinus Aquiliensis, *Carmina*, II.
10 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, vol. 1, 18, lines 58–60, 92, lines 50–52, 127, line 73.
11 *Conversio Bagoariorum*, chs 10–11, 120–23.
12 Smith 1995, 170, 176–79; Wolfram 2001, 242. For the impact of the Frankish border on the formation of local polities, see Curta 2005.
13 Wolfram 1995, 310.
14 Engel 2001, 60.
15 Gračanin 2011, 140 n. 147, 154 n. 61.
16 Einhard (*VKM*, 17–18) says that Dacia on the left bank of the Danube was under Frankish control, which means that the Franks perceived the Obodrites as under their sway.
17 *VKM*, 15–17.
18 On deteriorating relations between the Bulgars and the Byzantines, see *BaB*, 159–286. See also the chapters by Sophoulis and Nikolov in this volume.
19 Gračanin 2011, 165–66.
20 On the synod, see Bratož 1998, 154–79.
21 Bratož 1993, 180; Wolfram 1995, 285–86, 303, 308.
22 Pilgrims from the principality of Lower Pannonia are recorded in 'The Gospel Book of Cividale', 249–50, 252.
23 See also Ivan Majnarić's study in this volume for the importance of the concept of *aemulatio imperii* and the process of 'othering' in the formation of ethnic identity along the south-eastern frontier of the Carolingian world.
24 Gračanin 2011, 137–39.
25 For the historical narrative of Liudewit's rebellion, see Wolfram 1987, 268–72; *FiF*, 186–92; Bowlus 1995, 60–71; Gračanin 2011, 158–64. The principal sources are

ARF s.a. 819–823, 149–64; *GHI* chs 32–36, ed. Pertz, 624–27; ed. and trans. Tremp, 390–417.

26 On the Plea of Rižana, see *FiF*, 200–43.

27 *ARF* s.a. 822, 157–59; *GHI* ch. 36, ed. Pertz, 627; ed. and trans. Tremp, 412–16.

28 For the iconoclast crisis and the rebellion of Thomas the Slav, see *BR*, 207–44.

29 *DAI*, ch. 29, 124, lines 60–63; *Life of Basil*, ch. 52, ed. Bekker, 288–89; ed. and trans. Ševčenko, 188–89.

30 Fortunatus accompanied a Byzantine embassy to Louis the Pious' court in 824 and was interrogated by the emperor about the reasons for his flight to Byzantine territory, while the Byzantine envoys said nothing in his defence (*ARF* s.a. 824, 164–67).

31 Miletić *et al*. 2015, 77–98. I wish to thank wholeheartedly Vinko Madiraca, who led the 2015 archaeological field campaign at the Brekinjova Kosa site, for kindly providing me with information on the preliminary research results.

32 Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 192, no. 533; Szentpéteri 2002, vol. 1, 70. See now the comprehensive study by Birgit Bühler (2014).

33 Vinski 1983–1984, 199, no. 18; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 166, no. 112; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122; Bilogrivić 2009, 132–33; Bilogrivić 2011, 86, 87.

34 Bošković 2002, 168, no. 41; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 112; Demo 2010, 71. Demo has re-dated the spearhead from the ninth to eleventh centuries (as suggested by Bošković and Sekelj Ivančan) to the late eighth/first half of the ninth century.

35 Demo 2010.

36 Vinski 1977–1978 [1979], 165–66, 177–78; Vinski 1983, 469, 472, 495; Vinski 1983–1984, 194–95, 199, no. 19; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122; Bilogrivić 2011, 86, 87.

37 Sekelj Ivančan 2004; Sekelj Ivančan 2007.

38 Marković and Zvijerac 2000, 56; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 120; Sekelj Ivančan 2007, 425. Željko Demo (1983–1984, 212–13) has classified the scramasax as an X-type sword dating from the second half of the ninth century.

39 Simoni 1982, 251–61; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 97, no. 21; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122; Rapan Papeša 2012, 427–28 (for the battle axe of the francisca type).

40 Tomičić 1997, 65; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122.

41 Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 119, no. 131; Szentpéteri 2002, vol. 1, 295; Filipec 2002–2003, 134, no. 28.

42 Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 179, no. 468; Burkowsky 1999, 88–89, 90; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122.

43 Vinski 1977–1978 [1979], 176 n. 192; Bekić 2003, 169.

44 Marković and Zvijerac 2000, 57.

45 Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 239, no. 792.

46 Demo 2010, 71; Tomičić 2013, 137–39.

47 Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 93, no. 1.

48 Vinski 1983–1984, 199, no. 17; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 94, no. 6; Bilogrivić 2009, 134.

49 Dimitrijević 1966; Trbuhović 1982, 73; Szentpéteri 2002, vol. 1, 431.

50 Bartczak 1997–1998, 265.

51 Bartczak 1997–1998, 261.

52 *OEE*, 377–78, 828.

53 Kovács 1989, 55, no. 277.

54 Mirnik 1997, 194, 198, nos 10–14 (incorrectly identified as dirhams, which is repeated in Gračanin 2011, 166). One more Arab dinar, dated to 707/708, has been found at Futog on the northern bank of the Danube (Kovács 1989, 121; *OEE*, 377, 822), strictly speaking outside the region between the Sava, the Drava and the Danube; it has therefore been omitted from this overview.

55 Vinski 1977–1978 [1979], 184.

56 Vinski 1977–1978 [1979], 184; Burkowsky 1999, 90.

57 Two battle axes from the Jagnjeđe gravel pit, broadly dated between the eighth and tenth centuries: Kolar 1976, 110–11; Marković 1993.

58 One battle axe was found at the Dožina/Dužina site (Marković 1997, 37) and another to the south of the Prečno Pole 1 site (Sekelj Ivančan and Zvijerac 1997, 66); both are broadly dated to the eighth to tenth centuries.

59 Filipec 2002–2003, 125.

60 Weaponry discovered in burials includes, for example, an iron axe from Brezje (near Varaždin), found with fragmented pottery and dated to the late eighth and early ninth centuries (Bekić 2006, 290); a small iron axe found together with a pottery vessel in the gravel pit at Stara Šljunčara, Novo Čiče, south of the Sava and dated to the late eighth century (Rendić-Miočević 1995, 156, nos 414–15; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 99, no. 34; Filipec 2002–2003, 133, no. 23); and a massive iron axe found with a pot and dated to the late eighth century (Rendić-Miočević 1995, 153, no. 407; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 93, no. 1).

61 Bowlus 1995, 49–52.

62 Žeravica 1985–1986, 165; Tomičić 1997, 65.

63 Miletić 1963, 158, 160.

64 Tomičić 2000, 157.

65 Simoni 1982.

66 Sokol 1986, 56; Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 97; Rapan Papeša 2012, 427–28.

67 Bekić 2003, 165–66, 173–74.

68 Bekić 2003, 174.

69 Sekelj Ivančan 2007, 422.

70 Sekelj Ivančan 2007, 422.

71 Vinski 1983, 495. One may also note the chance find of an X-type sword at the Plana site in Brodski Drenovac, where an Avar-Slav necropolis dating from around 800 has been discovered (Sekelj Ivančan 1995, 191, no. 534; Szentpéteri 2002, vol. 1, 71); the sword probably dates to the second half of the ninth century, and comes from a looted grave located close to the Avar-Slav graveyard (Vinski-Gasparini and Ercegović 1958, 145, 153; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122).

72 Vinski 1981, 32; Sekelj Ivančan 2004, 122.

73 Gračanin 2011, 160–61.

74 It is worth noting that a gold ring with the inscription 'IYI' is usually taken to indicate a lasting Bulgar influence in the region between the Sava, Drava and Danube and that even the Brestovac belt assemblage was worn by a Bulgar (see Stanilov 2006, 221, 223). However, the ring may have been an import from Bulgar territory, whereas the style and technique of the belt assemblage point to Byzantine models, which were also imitated in the Avar khaganate (see Bühler 2014, 198–202). There is really no need to explain the find of either the ring or the belt assemblage as proof of a Bulgar presence in the region, given Frankish contacts with the Timociani: previously under Bulgar sway, in 818 the Timociani came over to the Franks. Furthermore, the 'treasure' is likely to have arrived well before the Bulgars intervened in the region; for details about Frankish-Bulgar relations in ninth-century southern Pannonia, see Gračanin 2013, 3–18.

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15 Changing political landscapes in the ninth-century central Carpathian basin

Interpreting recent settlement excavation data

Miklós Takács

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to present various problems of historical geography, and to focus on one particularly interesting aspect of the material culture of the central Carpathian basin: settlement remains from the time of the collapse of the Avar khaganate at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries. The main conclusions are based on an evaluation of the archaeological findings in the region, with special emphasis on historical interpretation of the most recent settlement excavations. However, first we should clarify definitions and address some current methodological problems, including what we mean by the term 'Pannonia'; where we think military campaiging and local conflict took place in the Carpathian basin at this time; and how should we interpret the early medieval settlements that have come to light throughout the area?

'Pannonia' in the historical and archaeological literature

The problem of multiple, co-existing vocabularies and the consequent uncertainty of meaning for frequently used terms may sound like a commonplace, but it is of a crucial importance when analysing the archaeology of the early medieval Carpathian basin. One such term is 'Pannonia', which appears frequently both in our written sources and in scholarship. This highly ambiguous toponym may denote any of the various parts of the two Roman – or four late antique – provinces which straddle the territories of seven modern states, each with its own distinct traditions of historical and archaeological research.[1] More importantly, the term 'Pannonia' has changed meaning over time, with several new interpretations developing in the Middle Ages and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, quite independently of historical or archaeological research into the original two Roman, or four late antique, provinces (see Map 4).

   The obvious starting point for discussion is the boundaries of the Roman provinces. They stretched along the western part of the Carpathian basin, with the Danube forming the northern and eastern border.[2] The line of the Danube also formed the border of the whole *imperium Romanum*, which is therefore easy to delineate. The western and southern borders faced Noricum and Dalmatia and comprised the eastern end of the Alps and the northern Dinaric range. There is

some uncertainty in the literature regarding the exact extent of the Roman provinces of Pannonia to the west and south.[3] The problem of the different use of the term 'Pannonia' in modern times, however, is not a consequence of this uncertainty, but a later development of the term from the Middle Ages onwards. A short digression here will shed light on some of these differences in meaning.

The internal borders of the province evidently underwent profound changes in its history. From the first to the third centuries, the terms Pannonia Inferior and Pannonia Superior denoted the eastern and the western part of the region respectively.[4] The division was along a line stretching from north-east to south-west. A shift in the meaning of these particular terms is perceptible in our Carolingian written sources, where the term 'Pannonia' appears frequently. Only a few Carolingian authors refer to the partition of Pannonia using the classical distinction. For example, the writer of *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* uses the term 'Pannonia Superior' for the region between the Vienna Woods and the river Rába, and 'Pannonia Inferior' for the region lying between the Rába and the estuary of the river Drava flowing into the Danube. Other authors, for instance the writer of the *Annales regni Francorum* for the years 818–819, uses the terms 'Upper and Lower Pannonia' dividing the territory of the former Roman province into a northern and a southern part, separated by the Drava.[5] The modern use of these two terms follows the post-classical usage of Carolingian authors, most of whom were unaware of the previous meanings of these toponyms.

In the eleventh century the term 'Pannonia' began to appear in written sources and on coins as the name of the newly established Hungarian kingdom.[6] As the territory under the rule of Hungarian kings included most of the Carpathian basin from the beginning, the term 'Pannonia' now encompassed the northern, eastern and south-eastern parts of the basin, even though these territories had never been part of the Roman empire under this name. The medieval term 'Pannonia' also began to extend to the territory of Transylvania, even though in the Roman era – between AD 106 and AD 271–275 – it had been the province of Dacia.[7] Pannonia as the name of the Hungarian kingdom occurs mainly in our eleventh-century sources, and was gradually replaced with the Latin *Hungaria*.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, especially in the Hungarian royal court, 'Pannonia' regained popularity as a geographical term inherited from antiquity. King Matthias (1458–1490) was familiar with the ideas of humanism, and his interests gave an impetus to the revival of classical geographical terms.[8] None of the works written at this time in the Hungarian court is known to have contained an exact geographical definition of the boundaries of Pannonia. However, assuming that humanist scholars in the court of King Matthias were aware of the differences, it is justifiable to suggest that they returned to using this term in the Roman way. The term 'Pannonia' remained in use after Matthias' death and enjoyed increasing popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries following the Ottoman conquest of central Hungary.[9]

At the turn of the seventeenth century, interest in the term 'Pannonia' was rekindled, but this time its definition enjoyed attention too. The growing interest is likely to have been connected with the wars against the Ottomans and the

liberation of the country from Turkish rule.[10] The campaign of the Holy League also brought soldiers with scholarly interests into the Carpathian basin. One such was Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1658–1730), a polymath who not only promoted the term 'Pannonia' in his works, but also contributed geographical, geological, hydrological and archaeological data to the definition of the toponym.[11] His works provided the starting point for many later scientific endeavours, as can be seen, for example, in the persistent use of the term 'Pannonian Sea'. It was Lajos Telegdi Róth (Ludwig Roth von Telegd) who in 1879 first described the Miocene-era sea located in the lowlands of the Carpathian basin and named it the Pannonian Sea.[12] This renaming gained considerable popularity and contributed to the further spread of the term 'Pannonia,' which by then had come to encompass the entire eastern Carpathian basin, including the territories beyond the left bank of the Danube.

The vocabulary of various national historiographies and archaeologies is based on these developments, but with notable differences. Hungarian scholarship uses the term 'Pannonia' as synonymous with 'Transdanubia' to describe the western part of Hungary:[13] thus to the south, the boundary of Pannonia is the river Drava, excluding the southern part of the region between the Drava and Sava. Austrian and Slovenian historians and archaeologists use the term in a twofold manner.[14] The geographical extent of Pannonia is not contested in their national historiographies. Yet they also use terms such as the 'Pannonian region' of Austria or Slovenia. The former often denotes Burgenland, despite the fact that Pannonia also included parts of modern Lower Austria. The latter usually describes the two regions of modern Slovenia lying on the Mura river, even though the borders of Roman Pannonia lay further to the west. In Croatian literature, the term 'Pannonia' usually refers to the region between the Drava and the Sava, that is only the southern part of the region.[15] The most curious use of this term is to be found in the Serbian literature, especially in publications printed in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.[16] Here the term 'Pannonia' (Panonija) has become a synonym for the enlarged territory of the autonomous province.

The diverse meanings of the term 'Pannonia', as well as the transformation it has undergone throughout the ages, should be borne in mind when considering the political changes which took place at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries.

Possible military campaign zones in the Carpathian basin

The following discussion is to some extent inspired by the copious archaeological literature dealing with the material culture of the late Avar Age.[17] In most of these works – and they really are numerous – the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries is described not only as the period when the Avar khaganate collapsed, but also as a time of cataclysm: a series of devastating wars that exterminated the arms-bearing elite of Avar society as well as most of the population.[18] There are only minor variations in our historiographical narrative. Some Hungarian historians and archaeologists emphasize the negative impact of the Franks' and

the Bulgars' military campaigns, while others focus on the devastating conse-
quences of internal conflict. It should be stressed that the concept of catastrophic
depopulation of the territory of the former Avar khaganate is not an archaeolo-
gist's hypothesis. Three eminent Hungarian historians of the Middle Ages, József
(Josef) Deér, Péter Váczy and György Györffy, published this thesis in the 1960s
as an explanation for events at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries, and
the subsequent transformation of political structures in the Carpathian basin in the
ninth century.[19]

Establishing the location of possible campaign zones, as well as a tentative list
of areas least likely to have been affected by these raids and internal conflicts, first
requires a list of known campaigns and internal conflicts and their precise loca-
tions. Most of the necessary data can be extracted from the works of István Bóna,
one of the most prolific and acclaimed researchers on the material culture of the
Avar khaganate;[20] he has also repeatedly emphasized that catastrophic depopula-
tion was a consequence of the wars at the end of the eighth and early ninth cen-
turies.[21] In addition, this core database is supplemented with the results of more
recent scholarship, including that of Péter Váczy, Walter Pohl and Béla Miklós
Szőke. The following section attempts to compile such a list.

788: First clashes on the border between the Carolingian empire and the Avar
        khaganate after a relatively lengthy spell of peace.[22] According to Bóna,
        the Avars attacked the Carolingian border defences in the region of mod-
        ern Friuli, and the Franks breached the Avar border in present-day Lower
        Austria.[23] The Frankish army headed east along the right bank of the
        Danube. Bóna suggests that this army only reached the frontier zones of
        the khaganate, near the river Ibbs in the western part of modern Lower
        Austria.[24]
791: Campaign by Charlemagne against the Avars.[25] At first Pippin, king of Italy,
        led a raid into the eastern Alps, but only reached the frontier zone of the
        khaganate. According to Bóna, the main Frankish army marched east
        along both banks of the Danube and transported troops by ship along the
        river.[26] These armies may have reached the Rába estuary east of the town
        of Arrabona (Győr). Charlemagne's army returned homewards in separate
        columns. In order to reach the Alps, one of these columns crossed the
        Bohemians' lands, while the majority of the expeditionary forces used the
        route along the Rába.
795: Internal clashes between the highest leaders of the Avar khaganate, ending
        with the assassination of the khagan and the jugur.[27] While it is not possi-
        ble to locate these armed conflicts within the territory of the khaganate, the
        political outcome is clear: the tudun, the third in command of the khaga-
        nate, swore an oath of fidelity to Charlemagne in Aachen.
796: Campaign by Eric, duke of Friuli, with the help of the Slav leader Vojnomir,
        in an unspecified part of the western Balkans.[28] The Frankish army
        marched from the northern shores of the Adriatic into the core areas of the
        khaganate, with the aim of sacking the central compound of the khagan,

the *hring*. Since the *hring*'s location is unknown, we cannot say exactly where this campaign took place. The one certain fact is that Eric's army moved across the western parts of what is now mainland Croatia. There are several possible itineraries for the army's subsequent progress. If the *hring* lay midway between the Danube and the Tisza, as Bóna and others suggest,[29] Eric's army must have moved through the central parts of Slavonia and the southern parts of Transdanubia as well. However, if the *hring* was in the southern Carpathian basin,[30] Eric's and Vojnomir's army is likely to have marched either along the northern banks of the Sava or along the southern banks of the Drava.

796: Another Frankish campaign in the same year led by Pippin, king of Italy.[31] Pippin's army reached the banks of the Danube and held a synod there, which was important primarily for the Christian subjects of the collapsing khaganate. The army reached the Avars' *hring*, where the new khagan took an oath of fidelity to Pippin. As before, the exact location is uncertain. Most scholars believe that Pippin's army used the aforementioned *limes* route, running from Bavaria into the khaganate along the right bank of the Danube, and that the synod probably took place somewhere on the northern or eastern borders of the old province of Pannonia.[32] In contrast, Hrvoje Gračanin suggests that Pippin launched his raids from the northern Adriatic region and that the synod took place somewhere in the region of Syrmia, that is between the Danube and Sava rivers. It follows from this theory that Pippin's army used the road along the right bank of the Drava.[33] As neither of the suggested geographical locations relies on firm evidence, both must be treated as hypotheses at this point.

799: Baptism of the tudun closely followed by his mutiny, in turn sparking a Frankish revenge raid against his territory.[34] According to Bóna this raid was probably launched against the western (i.e. Pannonian) part of the khaganate – that is the area of modern Lower Austria, Burgenland and western Hungary[35] – and caused its depopulation.[36] Bóna cites Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* as a written source attesting the catastrophic consequences of a Frankish raid in 796. His argument has its weaknesses in both chronology and interpretation of the text. Einhard's two sentences in Chapter 13 about the consequences of the 796 raid are problematic: the first states that Pannonia was left 'vacua omni habitatore';[37] the second that in Pannonia 'tota in hoc bello Hunorum nobilitas periit'.[38] Although Einhard clearly refers to the annihilation of the Avar elite here, rather than disappearance of the whole population, one must emphasize that this nuance is perhaps perceptible to modern readers only. A closer look at these sentences may provide a clue to understanding the situation in Pannonia at the turn of the eighth century. It is unlikely that Einhard intended to comment on the low-ranking inhabitants of the collapsing khaganate, as they had no military power that could affect the transformation of the political structure. They would not therefore have been covered by his description of the depopulation of the newly acquired province.

802: The Avars kill two Frankish dignitaries in a place called 'castellum Gun-
tionis' on the western borders of the khaganate.[39] This place is usually
identified as one of the Roman frontier forts on the Danube in Lower
Austria.[40]

803: The tudun takes an oath of fidelity to Charlemagne in Regensburg.[41]

803–804: Campaign of the Bulgar khan Krum against the Avars, attested only
in a later source.[42] This raid, traditionally dated to 803–804, may have
devastated the eastern regions of the crumbling khaganate. According to
Bóna and Váczy, this was the raid that caused massive depopulation in the
eastern half of the Carpathian basin at the beginning of the ninth century.[43]
In contrast, Szőke argues that Krum's raid did not take place at all,[44] and
was the invention of the *Suidae lexicon*, compiled in Byzantium in the
second half of the tenth century.[45] Although highly interesting and worth
further investigation, my – possibly overcautious – view is that we should
not deny that the event occurred. The absence of Krum's raid from the
Carolingian sources can probably be explained by its significantly smaller
scale than Bóna and Váczy assume.[46]

Winter 804/805: According to Carolingian sources, the Avar khagan and his peo-
ple fled to the territories ruled by the Franks.[47] Bóna attributes their flight
to Krum's raid in the eastern parts of the former Avar khaganate.[48] But
since none of our reliable, early-ninth-century written sources equates the
first Bulgar state with 'Slavs', it is not justifiable to interpret the reason
given by the Frankish sources for the Avar flight – 'propter infestationem
Sclavorum' – as referring to the Bulgars.[49]

811: Anti-Frankish mutiny of the capcan and *canizauci*, followed by a revenge
raid against their territories.[50] According to Bóna, this raid was launched
against the western zones of the khaganate (modern Lower Austria, Bur-
genland and western Hungary).[51]

818: When the Obodrites (*Praedenecenti*) and Timociani, fleeing from Bulgar
territories, sent envoys to Louis the Pious in Herstal, asking for land to
settle under Frankish rule, a territory called 'Dacia' was granted to them.[52]
From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the idea that these two groups
settled in the southern part of the Carpathian basin – in Banat, Bačka and
Syrmia – has been almost unchallenged.[53] This interpretation is an implicit
extension of the theory that Frankish rule extended to the whole of the
southern Carpathian basin, including the Tisza valley. This idea goes back
to an 1844 work by Pavel Jozef Šafárik,[54] written before the development
of critical historiography, and should therefore be treated with caution.
Šafárik suggests that the Franks were in a position to control these regions
only in the first two decades of the ninth century, and that the Bulgar raids
in the 820s resulted in a new status quo.

819–822: Anti-Frankish uprising by Duke Liudewit.[55] As the core area of the ter-
ritories ruled by Liudewit lay in the western part of southern Pannonia,
that is between the Sava and Drava,[56] there is reason to believe that this

region was affected most by the campaigns led by various Frankish or Croatian dignitaries against the rebel.

822: The khagan and other Avar leaders appear at an imperial diet in Frankfurt to show their loyalty to the Carolingian emperor.[57]

827: Troops of the Bulgar khan Omurtag (*c.* 815–831), arriving by ship along the Drava, defeat Frankish allies in southern Pannonia.[58] Various parts of Slavonia or southern Transdanubia, as well as the area near the banks of the Drava, may have been affected by this campaign. The aim was to consolidate Bulgar rule in the south-western Carpathian basin. A single grave inscription from north-eastern Bulgaria attests another Bulgar raid which is likely to have taken place around the same time. According to this inscription, a Bulgar *tarkan* (a type of chieftain) by the name of Onegavon, a 'fed man' of Khan Omurtag, drowned in the Tisza river.[59] This inscription is usually interpreted as evidence for a Bulgar campaign somewhere in the Tisza valley. A third Bulgar raid aiming to conquer the southern parts of Transylvania also seems to have taken place around this time.[60] This third raid is attested by the formation of a new centre of power in Bălgrad and the surrounding region.[61]

829: Another Bulgar raid into Frankish-ruled territories.[62] This campaign was most likely undertaken in either western Syrmia, eastern Slavonia or both.

This detailed list of military campaigns and internal conflicts may provide clues to how the political structure of the Avar khaganate collapsed. Since this process had several phases, the primary cause – whether the Carolingian raids, those of the Bulgars, or the internal struggles of the Avar ruling elite itself – is difficult to determine. Instead of stressing the role of Charlemagne or other Frankish leaders in the collapse, Hungarian scholars, with the rare exception of Szőke, usually highlight the importance of internal conflicts or the catastrophic effects of Krum's raid, despite the fact that this raid is not attested in our contemporary sources.[63]

The data and findings of historical geography are the most relevant to our present analysis and lead to several conclusions. First of all, the scarcity of our sources is an important point to stress. In addition, our surviving material contains little geographical information, and most of it, with very few exceptions, is decidedly unreliable. Despite this, the crucial role of the route along the antique *limes*, that is the right bank of the Danube, and the use of the Danube as a waterway, is beyond doubt. Several examples clearly show the use of other waterways: the Drava for a naval campaign on at least one occasion, and Omurtag's possible second raid around 827, which, if we believe the Onegavon inscription, was associated with the Tisza. But all our other geographical locations are based on modern scholars' hypotheses and should be used with caution.

The evaluation of scarce and often unreliable data thus necessitates a nuanced and cautious methodology in order to establish possible areas of the Carpathian basin where conflict occurred at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries.

This primarily entails superimposing the regions where scholars have identified that conflicts took place onto a modern map, so as to delineate the maximum possible geographical extent of the Frankish and Bulgar campaigns. Our results are necessarily incomplete and speculative. Even the reconstructed itineraries of the various military campaigns remain hypothetical, and the areas where internal clashes took place, as well as the wider geographical surroundings of these conflicts, are almost impossible to place. Even so, the conclusion is obvious: not all the territory of the Avar khaganate was riddled with war and internal conflict. None of our contemporary written sources suggest that the northern part of the region between the Danube and the Tisza, or the north-eastern parts of the Great Plain on the eastern bank of the Tisza, were affected by military operations in the opening decades of the ninth century. We should bear this firmly in mind, especially when dealing with those scholarly works which accept the total devastation and depopulation of the whole territory of the khaganate as historical fact.

Interpreting early medieval settlement excavations across the Carpathian basin

Following our brief introduction to two important issues of historical geography, this section will address the extent to which the results of settlement archaeology can be used to analyse the process of the dissolution of the Avar khaganate at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries. The material largely comprises bulk data from settlement excavations, especially those carried out recently. These excavations were undertaken using modern methods, organizing the findings in well-documented settlement units and producing a wide range of artefacts classified by single distinguishing features. This kind of bulk data analysis has been particularly fruitful in Hungary, because in the two decades before 2012 large-scale projects were undertaken as rescue excavations, mostly due to motorway construction projects.[64] Trends have been similar in neighbouring countries, although with considerable variation depending on local legislation for archaeological heritage protection. Arguably, the best opportunities for protective archaeology since the millennium have been in Slovenia,[65] but Croatian archaeologists have also profited from opportunities for protective settlement archaeology, resulting in the excavation of several large-scale sites, mainly in eastern Slavonia. Yet while the Hungarian legal framework was initially favourable, protective archaeology suffered a significant setback in 2012; since then the country's legislation has become among the least archaeology-friendly in the region.

It is beyond our scope to examine the problems and results of the rescue excavations of early medieval settlements in their entirety. Excavations will therefore be selected for interpretation on the basis of their relevance to political changes in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. As the main focus of this study is the effects of raids by Franks or Bulgars on village-like settlements, the seven cases selected include excavations carried out in the frontier zones of the Avar khaganate – zones which were, according to our written sources, the most severely affected by these raids. The first two case studies are Lébény-Kaszás Domb[66] and Mosonszentmiklós-Lednice Domb,[67] which both cover an area of several

hectares. These sites lie in western Hungary, closest to the *limes* route, which, as we have seen, was used by various Carolingian armies on at least two and possibly three occasions. The third case is Vát-Telekes Dűlő, also in western Hungary in the vicinity of the Rába river.[68] According to Bóna, the route running along the bank of the Rába was used during Charlemagne's campaign of 791. The fourth, fifth and sixth cases are the sites of Murska Sobota-Grofovija,[69] Lipovci-Popava I,[70] and Nedelica-southern outskirts.[71] These all measure one or more hectares and lie on the northern bank of the Mura in present-day Slovenia, in the vicinity of the route stretching from the Adriatic to the Carpathian basin. This is the route most probably used by Eric, duke of Friuli, in his campaign that ended with the sacking of the *hring*, the central compound of the Avar khagan. The last case study is the site of Zemun-Šljunkara,[72] at the estuary of the Sava where it flows into the Danube in present-day Serbia. This site lies almost directly on the *limes* route connecting Singidunum (Belgrade) and the Carpathian basin. Without doubt, this is the route used by the Bulgars to enter the Carpathian basin in order to defeat the Avar khaganate.

Our seven selected settlement excavations vary in scale, methodology and the documentation of distinguishing features. Equally, the state of analysis and interpretation of the early medieval settlement units recovered differs from one site to another. However, despite these differences there are important common trends. For example, as previously suggested, all seven sites are situated on the edge of the Avar khaganate. All are dated to the eighth and ninth centuries, and, last but not least, no layers suggesting destruction have been found at any of these excavated settlements.

In order fully to appreciate this last point – the absence of destruction layers – another period of Hungarian medieval archaeology should be considered for purposes of comparison. In the past few years destruction layers have become a recurrent issue, mainly through the analysis and interpretation of several village-like settlements that were burned down in the thirteenth century.[73] The traces of destruction in these sites are not simply represented by burnt layers: we also find such features as human skeletons, or their disarticulated parts, as well as hidden treasure hoards containing jewellery and coins from before 1241–1242. The discernible level of destruction in these sites is far greater than that found at average medieval settlement sites in the Carpathian basin. The firm dating of the destruction layers in our thirteenth-century sites clearly makes them testimony to the Mongol raid on Hungary in 1241–1242.

What all seven of our selected case studies from the eighth and the ninth centuries have in common is a total absence of such burned-down remains of settlements, or of human skeletons and treasure hoards found within such settlements. The absence of these types of findings – assuming it is more than mere coincidence – suggests that neither the military campaigns of the Franks or Bulgars, nor the internal clashes at this time, aimed at total devastation of the Avar khaganate. The hypothesis of Deér, Váczy and Györffy about the depopulation of the khaganate at the beginning of the ninth century is not supported by the analysis of recent results from settlement archaeology.[74] This is in line with our contemporary written sources, which similarly fail to attest the total depopulation of the

khaganate. As Szőke has underlined, Krum's raid and its presumed catastrophic consequences do not appear in our Frankish sources, and are recorded only by the *Suidae lexicon* written at the end of the tenth century. And it is worth reiterating that even Einhard, the Carolingian author usually cited as primary evidence for total depopulation following the Frankish raid of 796, mentions the consequences of that raid only twice and in different ways.[75] His first statement suggests that Pannonia was left 'vacua omni habitatore', in contrast with his second: 'tota in hoc bello Hunorum nobilitas periit'; the latter clearly refers only to the Avar elite, not the whole population.

Conclusions based on the available data are necessarily speculative and need testing further through the analysis and interpretation of settlement excavation data. One shortcoming is our sample size of just seven excavations: this may be too small to formulate overarching conclusions on this scale. Further serious problems may crop up in the process of evaluating the archaeological material, for example, the consequence of an overly wide timeframe for the dating of various types of findings from the late Avar era. Yet as discussed, the silence of our eighth- and ninth-century written sources about a 'Mongol-style' military campaign – one causing the total destruction and depopulation in the whole Avar khaganate – is telling.

In general, the findings and materials from excavations of eighth- and ninth-century settlements on the western, south-western and southern edges of the Carpathian basin are currently below the level of quality and detail necessary for the data to be used in the reconstruction of political history. The fact remains that to our current knowledge, the wars and changes which transformed the political structure in this period are not reflected in the available archaeological material at all.

Conclusion

The title of the chapter promised to give some insight into the problems of reconstructing the changing political landscape in the ninth-century Carpathian basin. We briefly summarized the most salient aspects of three seemingly disparate questions, leading to the novel hypothesis put forward in the last section. The analysis of the first two issues of historical geography provided a background for the subsequent discussion about the interpretation of settlement excavations. The brief overview of such excavations around the western and southern edges of the Avar khaganate focused on a single discernible aspect: the possible existence of destruction layers in connection with either Frankish or Bulgar military campaigns at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries. The settlements were chosen precisely because they lay near the routes that these armies would most likely have taken as they moved towards the inner parts of the khaganate. However in spite of the range of different excavation and documentation techniques used across these case studies, none of the seven excavations exposed destruction layers. I would suggest that, if this fact is more than mere coincidence, it can be used to argue against the entrenched hypothesis that devastating wars caused a cataclysmic depopulation of the disintegrating Avar khaganate at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries. Naturally, as with any unorthodox conclusion

emerging from a previously thoroughly researched pool of sources, this proposition is tentative and remains hypothetical. In addition, a methodology relying on *argumentum ex silentio* means that the aim of the present chapter can only be to inspire future research and fresh approaches if we are to challenge current theories about the last days of the Avar khaganate.

Notes

1 A comparative study of these historiographic and archaeological traditions has yet to be undertaken, although for the former Yugoslavian states, see Takács 1991; Takács 2000.
2 Mócsy and Fitz 1990.
3 Mócsy and Fitz 1990, 53–55.
4 Mócsy and Fitz 1990, 53–54.
5 The meaning of the term 'Pannonia' in the Carolingian sources is analysed in Szenthe 2007, 22–23. See also Schwarcz 1993, 1655; Merta 2010, 171.
6 Veszprémy 1994.
7 Gruber 1986.
8 Nehring 1993; Mikó 1994.
9 Mikó 1994, 34–35.
10 For an overview of these events, see Szakály 1986.
11 Stoye 1994.
12 Telegdi Róth 1879. I am grateful to Pál Sümegi for this information.
13 Engel 1994, 13.
14 E.g. Zabehlicky 1996; Fujs 1996.
15 E.g. Gračanin 2009.
16 E.g. Popović 1997.
17 For an overview of this literature, see Szentpéteri 2002, vol. 2, 605–70.
18 The most significant contributions to this issue can be found in Bóna 1966, 319–23; Bóna 1990, 102.
19 Deér 1965; Váczy 1972. From the 1960s onwards György Györffy published many detailed studies on the catastrophic depopulation of the Carpathian basin; a summary of his ideas can be found in Györffy and Zólyomi 1994, 28–30.
20 Bóna 1966, 307–25; Bóna 1973; Bóna 1984, 336–73; Bóna 1994.
21 Bóna 1966, 319–23; Bóna 1990, 102.
22 Bóna 1984, 338; Bóna 1994, 74; Pohl 1988, 314; Szőke 2011, 56 n. 346.
23 Bóna 1984, 338.
24 Bóna 1984, 338.
25 Bóna 1966, 308 n. 159; Bóna 1994, 74; Váczy 1972, 408; Pohl 1988, 315–17; Szőke 2011, 12.
26 Bóna 1966, 308; Bóna 1973; Bóna 1984, 338–40; Bóna 1994.
27 Bóna 1966, 310; Szőke 2011, 13–15.
28 Bóna 1966, 310 n. 172; Váczy 1972, 408; Pohl 1988, 306; Szőke 2011, 24–28.
29 Bóna 1984, 341; Szentpéteri 1995. The idea that the Avar *hring* was situated in the region between the Danube and the Tisza has been accepted by Walter Pohl (1988, 319) and Hrvoje Gračanin (2009, 35).
30 Béla Miklós Szőke and Gračanin have suggested it was either near Attila's palace from the fifth century, or the Roman town of Sirmium: Szőke 2011, 34–39; Gračanin 2009; Gračanin 2011, 152–53.
31 Bóna 1966, 310 n. 171; Váczy 1972, 407 n. 34; Pohl 1988, 319; Szőke 2011, 28–39.
32 Bóna 1984, 341.
33 Gračanin 2009, 36.

34 Bóna 1966, 312 n. 188; Váczy 1972, 413 n. 54; Pohl 1988, 321; Szőke 2011, 54.
35 Bóna 1966, 312; Bóna 1984, 342.
36 Bóna 1966, 312 n. 191.
37 *VKM*, 16; cited by Váczy 1972, 396.
38 *VKM*, 16–17; cited by Bóna 1966, 312 n. 191.
39 Váczy 1972, 414 n. 56; Pohl 1988, 321; Szőke 2011, 65.
40 Bóna 1984, 342; see also the chapter by Szőke in this volume.
41 Bóna 1966, 319 n. 235, Pohl 1988, 322; Szőke 2011, 67.
42 Bóna 1966, 323–24; Bóna 1984, 343; Váczy 1972, 395–404.
43 Bóna 1990, 102.
44 Szőke 1993, 33–38.
45 Hörander 1999.
46 Bóna 1990, 102.
47 Bóna 1966, 320 nn. 239, 240; Pohl 1988, 322; Szőke 2011, 72–88.
48 Bóna 1966, 323–24.
49 *ARF* s.a. 805, 119.
50 *ARF* s.a. 811, 135; Bóna 1966, 323 n. 264; Pohl 1988, 323; Szőke 2011, 97.
51 Bóna 1984, 348.
52 Pohl 1988, 327; Szőke 2011, 124–28.
53 See, for example, Bóna 1984, 370; Szőke 2011, 127 n. 776.
54 Šafárik 1843–1844, vol. 2, 208, 455, 588; cited by Szőke 2011, 127 n. 776.
55 Goldstein 1991; Szőke 2011, 114–24.
56 Klaić 1990, 47–52.
57 Pohl 1988, 323.
58 Bóna 1990, 102; Szőke 2011, 134.
59 Fehér 1931, 146.
60 Bóna 1990, 102.
61 The importance of this centre and its surroundings was emphasized in: Bóna 1994;
    Madgearu 2005.
62 Bóna 1990, 102; Szőke 2011, 135.
63 See Bóna 1984, 343.
64 An overview of the main results of these excavations can be found in Takács 2010.
65 For the main results of these excavations, see Guštin 2002; Guštin 2008.
66 Takács 1996; Takács 2002.
67 Bödőcs 2002.
68 Skriba 2010.
69 Novšak 2002.
70 Cipot 2008.
71 Lazar 2008.
72 Janković 1995–1996.
73 Laszlovszky 2007.
74 Deér 1965; Váczy 1972; Györffy and Zólyomi 1994, 28–30.
75 *VKM*, 16–17. See above, nn. 37, 38.

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The church between Rome and Constantinople

16 Rome and the heritage of ancient Illyricum in the ninth century[*]

Maddalena Betti

Introduction

As has been noted by two eminent historians of the papacy, Richard Sullivan and Ottorino Bertolini, papal missionary activity was not a continuous phenomenon, and it functioned in very different geopolitical contexts during the early Middle Ages.[1] This missionary activity was promoted by only a small number of popes, who played an important role in the Christianization of Europe, and it generally corresponded to the high points of papal diplomacy: in other words, papal missionary activity was a reflection of the international stature which the papacy periodically assumed in the early Middle Ages. The second half of the ninth century stands out as one of the most significant eras in the history of papal missionary activity, and a significant revival is well attested by our sources during the pontificates of Nicholas I (858–867), Hadrian II (867–872) and John VIII (872–882). The missionary activity of these three popes was directed particularly at central and south-eastern Europe, and it reached its peak under John. The rich correspondence we have for this pope – including 314 letters in John VIII's register and sixty-two fragments of his letters in our canonical collections – contains a significant number of missionary letters, addressed especially to the leaders who ruled in the Danube region and the Balkans.[2] They testify to fairly active diplomatic contacts with Svatopluk, ruler of the Moravians; Kocel, *comes* of Lower Pannonia; Mutimir, leader of the Serbs; Domagoj, Zdeslav and Branimir, the first Croatian leaders; and, of course, the Bulgarian khan Boris-Michael. The Holy See took advantage of these valuable contacts to intervene in processes which had been set in motion by other missionary agencies, in order to keep tight control over the establishment of church organizations in these new territories. For example, the important link with Svatopluk and the decision to appoint the Greek Methodius as a missionary bishop promoted the establishment of the fragile Moravian church under papal jurisdiction; and the relationship with Khan Boris-Michael assured, at least temporarily, Roman leadership over the emerging Bulgarian church. The Holy See also used its diplomatic contacts with Slav leaders to monitor and control pre-existing ecclesiastical structures more closely: the valuable relationship with Branimir allowed Rome to carve out an important role in the Christianization

of the Croats and to assume control over ecclesiastical matters in the archdiocese of Split and along the Dalmatian coast.[3]

Papal arguments in the ninth century:
The 'Illyricum heritage'

Papal intervention, however, often failed to produce the hoped-for results. It was regarded as unwelcome by authorities who were keen to impose their own hegemony over post-Avar Illyricum. In particular, diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Slav and Bulgarian leaders aroused deep concern, because they bypassed those parties who already had an interest in the Danubian region and in the Balkans. Papal involvement provoked a strong reaction from both the Byzantines and the Franks, who had supported successful missionary processes for decades. The Byzantines did not appreciate the Bulgarian-papal alliance, and they challenged the claims of the Holy See to establish a Bulgarian church under its obedience in the heart of the ancient *pars orientis* of the Roman empire.[4] The Franks also tried on several occasions to sabotage the work of the papal missionary, Methodius, displaying their intolerance for a possible Pannonian-Moravian church under Roman jurisdiction close to the eastern *limes* of the Carolingian empire.[5] To counter Byzantine and Frankish objections, the Holy See drew up a single line of defence, which would theoretically legitimize its missionary rights in both central and south-eastern Europe. This defence was based on the argument – developed in various ways – concerning the papal heritage of late antique Illyricum. In other words, the disputed missionary territory from Pannonia to the kingdom of the Bulgarians was identified with the prefecture of Illyricum, which had been assigned to the jurisdiction of the bishops of Rome according to fourth-century papal documentation. In response to the Bavarians, who opposed the establishment of a new ecclesiastical province in Pannonia and Moravia, John VIII writes that the territory in question was ancient Pannonia. He goes on to explain that the province of Pannonia was an integral part of Roman Illyricum and that Illyricum, along with Italy and the western regions, fell within papal jurisdiction. The territory occupied by the Pannonian and Moravian Slavs could not therefore form part of the Salzburg archdiocese, but had to be subject to the Holy See.[6] To the Byzantines, who opposed Roman interference in the Bulgarian realm, Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII repeatedly emphasize that because the Bulgarians were settled in ancient Eastern Illyricum, ecclesiastical jurisdiction over their new church lay with Rome and not with Constantinople.[7] They thus claimed jurisdiction over Danubian Europe and the Balkan peninsula, invoking the restoration of the *iura antiqua* originally exercised by the bishops of Rome in the diocese of Illyricum. This ideological shield allowed the papacy to reject any criticism from the Franks and the Byzantines. In their letters, our ninth-century popes claim that these *iura antiqua* over ancient Roman Illyricum were eternal and inalienable because neither geopolitical history nor the movements of people could change the original ecclesiastical constitution. Jurisdiction over the new missionary territories lay with Rome because the prefecture of 'Illyricum' had originally been assigned to the papacy: it did not matter that other missionary agencies were

now active in the region, or that the exercise of authority there by the Holy See had been interrupted.[8] Neither the argument that these territories were culturally and linguistically Greek, nor that they were within the Carolingian or Byzantine sphere of influence could be considered a valid objection to the restoration of the original ecclesiastical constitution.

This rhetorical 'Illyricum heritage' argument was the basis for legitimizing papal intervention in Danubian Europe and the Balkan peninsula in the second half of the ninth century. I shall discuss the genesis of this argument, which the Holy See developed and consistently invoked to legitimize its jurisdictional claim. I shall also consider papal diplomacy during the Carolingian period, especially in the 780s, in an attempt to clarify the plans and aspirations of the Holy See during a phase of apparent contraction in the diplomatic opportunities available to it. It is sometimes assumed that it was Pope Nicholas I who inaugurated the use of the 'Illyricum heritage' argument to stake a claim for restoring the *iura antiqua*, thus ensuring Roman jurisdiction over the emerging Bulgarian church. In a letter of 25 September 860, he wrote to Emperor Michael III demanding restoration of the *ius dioeceseos*. Specifically, Nicholas sought the return of the diocese of southern Italy, Sicily and Crete to the papal sphere, and an end to the Constantinopolitan patriarchate's intervention in the provinces of the ancient prefecture of Illyricum, which he lists as Epirus Vetus, Epirus Nova, Illyricum, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea, Moesia, Dardania and Praevali-tana (see Map 9).[9] According to Vittorio Peri, Nicholas I was the first pope to reclaim Roman patriarchal authority over those ethnically Greek regions which belonged to the Holy See according both to tradition and to the canons.[10] Only in the second half of the ninth century did the papacy turn its attention to the wide region of Eastern Illyricum, in the wake of the new opportunities presented by the Christianization of the Bulgars and Slavs. It is certainly correct to highlight Nicholas' role in establishing the Bulgarian church, as our sources testify; and his claim to restore the 'usurped' Roman *iura antiqua* would later be interpreted and used by John VIII in different geopolitical contexts. However, my focus here is on the origins of this sudden shift in the degree of papal attention towards the east and, in this regard, I should like to discuss the problematic role of Pope Hadrian I (772–795), to whom many historians have attributed the first claim of Roman jurisdiction over Illyricum.[11]

Hadrian I's claim to Illyricum

I shall try to address the issue of Hadrian I's possible interest in the church admin-istration of the Balkans in the context of his probable efforts to regain a leading role as a critical mediator in the relationship between the Franks and the Byzan-tines. The evidence is unfortunately sparse, and the little information we do have is difficult to interpret. In addition, part of our evidence comes from the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), which were translated into Latin by Anastasius the Librarian in the 870s, at the height of the jurisdictional conflict for control of the Bulgarian church between the Holy See and the Constantinopolitan patriar-chate.[12] In other words, backdating the claim over Illyricum to the pontificate of

Hadrian I would have been very profitable for the Roman cause in the second half of the ninth century. Anastasius' letter to Pope Hadrian II of 871, announcing the translation into Latin of the acts of the Eighth Ecumenical Council, allows us to understand how Roman jurisdiction over the Bulgarian church was a priority on the papal political agenda.[13] In his preface, Anastasius explains the reasons for his Latin translation and outlines the major topics discussed by the council, providing a useful historical excursus and describing the complex issues around Patriarch Photios. But he also sketches the ecclesiastical history of Illyricum, in support of the Roman claim. Anastasius recalls how originally – to be exact, since the pontificate of Damasus (366–384) – the Holy See had exercised its rights over the whole of Eastern Illyricum, including the Danube region.[14] However, the division of the empire into west and east (*pars occidentis* and *pars orientis*) and the abuses of the Constantinopolitan church had compromised the possibility of exercising Roman rights over the region.[15] Anastasius then recalls that the Bulgarians who had settled in Illyricum recognized the rights of the Holy See, despite the ongoing boycott of the Greek clergy. This overview gives us an idea of the importance of the issue and formulates the official case for why the Bulgarian church should be under Roman jurisdiction. However, it is interesting to note that Anastasius makes no explicit reference to the reason why Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily had been transferred to the jurisdiction of Constantinople during the pontificate of Gregory III (731–740), in punishment for Roman opposition to iconoclasm.[16] Nor does he refer to any of Hadrian I's attempts to recover the lost dioceses in Illyricum during the Council of Nicaea. The reasons for his silence should probably be ascribed to a desire not to return to an operation which ended in diplomatic failure: in other words, Anastasius' narrative is not an exhaustive historical account, but rather a selection of historical information upon which to base papal claims over the Bulgarian church in the second half of the ninth century.

I shall now turn to our papal sources from Hadrian I's pontificate in order to investigate the pontiff's claim to jurisdiction over Eastern Illyricum. As we have seen, Vittorio Peri rejects the hypothesis that Hadrian demanded the restitution of Illyricum from the patriarchate of Constantinople, while accepting that he did request the return of the dioceses of southern Italy, Sicily and Crete.[17] Other scholars suggest that Hadrian's claim was not only for southern Italy, Sicily and Crete, but also for Illyricum. The absence of more specific geographical information in the letters attributed to Hadrian I is certainly disconcerting.

The first letter I shall discuss is from Hadrian to Irene and Constantine VI, during the Council of Nicaea in 787. This letter is preserved amongst the council's acts and was retranslated into Latin by Anastasius around 870. Anastasius considered the first Latin translation of the council's acts – which reached Charlemagne shortly after the conclusion of the proceedings at Nicaea, but which is now lost – to be of poor quality.[18] He translates the first part of the letter from Hadrian I to the Byzantine emperors from the Greek, but then alerts the reader to the fact that although the letter continues, the Byzantines had censored the final part. However, Anastasius claims to have this final part and introduces it into his translation, giving only the Latin version. The text introduced by Anastasius had every reason to be displeasing to the organizers of the council.[19] After expressing satisfaction with the Byzantine

decision to reject iconoclasm and return to communion with the other churches, Hadrian seeks restitution of the Roman revenues for the sustenance of the poor and expenses of worship, the *patrimonium Sancti Petri*, which had been stolen and given to the supporters of iconoclasm,[20] and claims the right to consecrate bishops and archbishops in the ecclesiastical provinces which canonically came under Roman jurisdiction. Hadrian raises other matters, among them the layman Tarasios' election to patriarchal office and the fact that the imperial letter (*sacra*) calls Tarasios 'ecumenical'. He concludes with a somewhat elusive reference to Charlemagne, claiming that the 'rex Francorum et Longobardorum' and *patricius Romanorum* had brought together under his jurisdiction all the *barbarae nationes*, thus displaying due deference towards the Holy See. The pope also declares that Charlemagne had returned to Rome everything that had been stolen by the Lombards: *provinciae*, *civitates*, *castra*, *cetera territoria* and *patrimonia*.[21] The possibility that this text had been an integral part of the letter from Hadrian I to Irene and Constantine VI, and that the Byzantines chose to omit it, seems very likely. Around 791, Hadrian sent a letter to Charlemagne confirming the papacy's requests to the Constantinopolitan church during the Council of Nicaea. After disputing the Franks' rejection of the council's decisions and despite Hadrian's welcoming of the new Byzantine orientation, the Byzantines had left open the question of the Roman revenues and dioceses which had been seized during the iconoclasm crisis. Indeed, Hadrian threatens to declare the Byzantine emperors heretics if they do not take action on the matter.[22] These statements show that issues of restitution, not only of the *patrimonium* but also of the jurisdictional rights seized by Leo III, were a priority during Hadrian I's pontificate. It is probable that such demands were indeed included in Hadrian's letter to Irene and Constantine, but that they were ignored and later expunged from the council's official acts. It is also credible that his polemic against Patriarch Tarasios was unwelcome and thus also expunged. Finally, the panegyric to Charlemagne, *patricius Romanorum*, was misguided at a time when diplomatic relations between the Carolingians and Byzantium were growing increasingly hostile. For these reasons, Anastasius' addition to the letter of Hadrian to Irene and Constantine can, I think, be considered authentic.

Conclusion

Hadrian does not name the geographic regions over which he wants to reassert papal jurisdiction, either in his letter to the Byzantine emperors or in his letter to Charlemagne. He merely refers to all those ecclesiastical provinces which had been seized during the iconoclasm crisis. In the former letter, his vagueness suggests that the papal legates probably had to explain their jurisdictional demands in detail during the council. In another letter, addressed to the Abbot of St Denis, Hadrian does define papal jurisdiction geographically, using late Roman provinces, but again he does not mention Illyricum:

> Patet enim omnibus et prorsus agnitum est, sicut decreta sanctorum pontificum censuerunt, quia in omnem Italiam, Gallias, Hispanias, Africam atque Siciliam insulasque interiacentes nullum instituisse ecclesias, nisi eos, quos venerabilis apostolus Petrus aut eius successores constituerint sacerdotes.[23]

However, Hadrian did not always exclude Illyricum, and elsewhere he includes the Greek provinces of Illyricum as coming under Roman jurisdiction. Moreover, the fact that Hadrian does not list the Italian provinces in his claim suggests that his demand involved all the ecclesiastical provinces that had been transferred to Constantinople's jurisdiction, including Illyricum.

The problem of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Illyricum had been under discussion since the fourth century, and it depended on the ever-changing political situation in what was a disputed frontier region between the *pars occidentis* and the *pars orientis* of the Roman empire.[24] From Gregory the Great onwards, papal intervention in Illyricum had become ever more sporadic and ineffective, and assaults on the Balkan peninsula by Avars and Slavs interrupted the exercise of Roman authority over ecclesiastical structures there. The issue of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the region was reopened during the iconoclasm crisis, when Leo III's punitive action, including the transfer of Illyricum and other dioceses from Roman to Constantinopolitan jurisdiction (732–733), made 'Illyricum' topical once more. In response to losing its theoretical jurisdiction over Illyricum, the Holy See began to take an active interest in Illyrian affairs, and Hadrian is likely to have assumed its inclusion when he challenged Constantinople and demanded the restoration of the *iura sedium* seized by the iconoclast emperors. Thus it was Hadrian I who introduced the idea of restoring the original ecclesiastical constitution and gave it prominence, offering the popes of the second half of the ninth century an important ideological starting point for further development.

Finally, the Council of Nicaea was an opportunity for the papacy to recover an important international diplomatic role.[25] The Frankish conquest of the Lombard kingdom had greatly circumscribed the diplomatic opportunities open to the Holy See; from then on, Rome's interests necessarily became intertwined with those of the Carolingians. In this light, Hadrian's passage concerning the 'rex Francorum et Longobardorum' in his letter to the Byzantine emperors takes on additional meaning. The pope depicts an idyllic relationship between Charlemagne and the Holy See: having destroyed the nefarious kingdom of the Lombards, Charlemagne restored patrimonies and territories to St Peter. By implication, Irene and Constantine VI, now victorious over the iconoclast heresy, should likewise restore the jurisdiction which belongs to Rome, both according to tradition and to the canons. It was an appropriate opportunity to revive the question of who had ecclesiastical control over Illyricum and to turn papal attention towards eastern affairs. Hadrian I launched a new diplomatic dialogue with the Byzantines, envisaging a role for the papacy as intermediary between the two great powers. Both Carolingian king and Byzantine emperor should show proper deference towards the successors of St Peter, particularly when it came to safeguarding the patrimonies and the jurisdictional rights of the Holy See. It is against this background that the question of Illyricum should be seen. The 'Illyricum heritage' argument of Hadrian I's pontificate was used to establish new diplomatic contacts with Byzantium, to search out new fields for papal political action, and thus to gain some freedom and independence from the Carolingian world.

Notes

* I heartily thank Alex Farquhar for helping to correct my English.
1 Papal missions refer here to a number of the Holy See's interventions in missionary territories, including the sending out of missionaries (legates, bishops, archbishops) to establish the new churches' ecclesiastical organization. See Sullivan 1955; Bertolini 1967. See also Markus 2002.
2 On John VIII's letters, see Lohrmann 1968; Jasper and Fuhrmann 2001, 127–30.
3 Peri 1982.
4 For an introduction to the Christianization of Bulgaria, see Vlasto 1970, 155–87; see also Simeonova 1998.
5 Dvornik 1970; see also Wood 2001, 168–86.
6 'Ipse nosti, o gloriosissime rex [Louis the German], quod Pannonica diocesis apostolice sedi sit subiecta, licet bellica clades eam ad tempus ab illa subtraxerit et gladius ad horam hostilis subduxerit. [. . .] Nam non solum intra Italiam ac ceteras Hesperies provincias, verum etiam intra totius Illyrici fines consecrationes ordinationes et dispositiones apostolica sedes patrare antiquitus consuevit, sicut nonnulla regesta et conscriptiones synodales atque ipsarum quoque plurima ecclesiarum in his positarum monimenta demonstrant.' (*Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, no. 21, 284).
7 An example can be found in the *Life* of Hadrian II from the *Liber pontificalis*. At the end of the Eighth Ecumenical Council (869–870), Boris' ambassadors arrived in Constantinople to ask the representatives of the eastern and western churches gathered there whether the Bulgarian church came under the jurisdiction of Rome or Byzantium. Both responses are recorded in the *Life*. The eastern churchmen argued for Byzantine rights, since Greek clergy had worked in Illyricum before the Bulgars occupied it. The papal legates, while recognizing that Boris' lands came under Byzantine political influence (*regnum Grecorum*), fiercely defended the integrity and inalienable prerogative of the ecclesiastical sees (*ius sedium*), regardless of changing geopolitical conditions, adding: 'Sedes apostolica, iuxta quod decretalibus sanctissimorum Romanorum presulum doceri poteritis, utramque Epirum, novam videlicet veteremque, totamque Thessaliam atque Dardaniam, in qua et Dardania civitas hodie demonstratur, cuius nunc patria ab his Vulgaris Vulgaria nuncupatur, antiquitus canonice ordinavit, optinuit, ac per hoc ordinationem, quam tunc paganorum Vulgarum irruptione omiserat, non a Constantinopolitana ecclesia modo, ut fingitur, abstulit, sed ab his factis ipsis christianis recepit' (*Liber pontificalis*, vol. 2, 183).
8 Claiming Roman jurisdictional rights over the Pannonian diocese, Pope John VIII wrote to the Bavarian clergy: 'Ceterum ubi paganorum et incredulorum furor in causa est, quantalibet pretereant tempora, iuri non preiudicat ecclesiarum, quae corporalia nescientes arma solum Dominum et propugnatorem suum, quando ei placuerit misereri, pacienter expectant. Verum si annorum prolixitas in talibus impedit, ergo Deus ipse reprehendendus est, qui post CCCC et XXX annos filios Israhel de durissima servitude Pharaonis et fornace ferrea liberavit, sed et ipse per se redemptor, qui hominum genus post tot annorum millia de inferni claustris eripuit' (*Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, no. 21, 284).
9 'Oportet enim vestrum imperiale decus, quod in omnibus ecclesiasticis utilitatibus vigere audivimus, ut antiquum morem, quem nostra ecclesia habuit, vestris temporibus restaurare dignemini, quatenus vicem, quam nostra sedes per episcopos vestris in partibus constitutos habuit, videlicet Thessalonicensem, qui Romanae sedis vicem per Eperum veterem Eperumque novum atque Illiricum, Macedoniam, Thessaliam, Achaiam, Daciam riperensem, Daciam mediterraneam, Misiam, Dardaniam et Praevalim, beato Petro apostolorum principi contradicere nullus praesumat; quae antecessorum nostrorum temporibus, scilicet Damasi, Siricii, Innocentii, Bonifacii, Caelestini, Xysti, Leonis, Hilari, Simplicii, Felicis atque Hormisdae sanctorum pontificum sacris dispositionibus augebatur': Nicholas I, *Epistolae*, no. 82, 438–39. This passage shows that Nicholas I had at his disposal the sixth-century *Collectio ecclesiae Thessalonicensis*,

whose purpose was to establish proof of the popes' uninterrupted ecclesiastical and jurisdictional sovereignty over Eastern Illyricum from the end of the fourth century: *Epistularum Romanorum pontificum*. On this canonical collection see Jasper and Fuhrmann 2001, 81–83.

10 Peri 1983; Peri 1991.

11 On Hadrian I, see Hartmann 2006.

12 *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum*, vol. 1, 118–73.

13 Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Epistolae*, no. 5, 403–15. The acts of the council have now been published: *Gesta sanctae ac universalis octavae synodi quae Constantinopoli congregate est*.

14 'Nam tota Dardania Thessalia Dacia et utraque Hepirus atque ceterae regiones iuxta Histrum fluvium sitae apostolicae sedis vestrae moderamine antiquitus praecipue regebantur et disponebantur': Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Epistolae*, no. 5, 411.

15 'Sed postquam imperatores Romanorum, qui nunc Grecorum appellantur, variorum fautores vel incentores effecti errorum sanctam Christi ecclesiam diversis heresibus scindere minime formidaverunt, scidit Deus imperium eorum, et in occiduis partibus paulatim regnare superno decernente iudicio cessaverunt [. . .] Sed quia isti cum Petro super petram verae confessionis stantes pestiferam suggestionem audire possunt, obaudire non possunt, mox illi, quoniam aliter laedere nequeunt, patrios et antiques terminos transferunt, privilegia sedis apostolicae corrumpunt et pene omnia iura disponendarum dioceseon auferunt atque suis haec fautoribus consentaneis et sectatoribus conferunt [. . .]': Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Epistolae*, no. 5, 411–12.

16 Venance Grumel (1952, 191) believes that these measures against the papacy were probably taken after the Byzantines lost their Italian territories in the years following the Lombard occupation of Ravenna in 751, while Milton Anastos (1957, 14) argues that the measures had already been taken under Leo III in the 730s. More recently, Brubaker and Haldon (2011, 174–75) have placed the removal of the dioceses of Sicily and Calabria, together with Illyricum, from the authority of Rome during the reign of Constantine V, probably after the Synod of Gentilly in 767. See also Burgarella 1989, 438–46.

17 For instance, in a letter to the Abbot of St Denis, Hadrian defines papal jurisdiction geographically by listing late Roman provinces, but he does not include Illyricum: *Epistolae selectae*, no. 1, 4.

18 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 1055A–1071B.

19 See Lamberz 2001. On the contents of the letter see also Noble 2009, 74, 388.

20 For the papal revenues seized by Emperor Leo III, see Theoph., 410; *CTC*, 568.

21 '[. . .] sicut filius et spiritualis compater noster dominus Carolus rex Francorum et Longobardorum [. . .] nostris obtemperans monitis, atque adimplens in omnibus voluntates, omnis Hesperiae occiduaeque partis barbaras nationes sub suis prosternens conculcavit pedibus, omnipotentatum illarum domans, et suo subiiciens regno adunavit. Unde per suas laboriosa certamina eidem Dei apostoli ecclesiae ob nimium amorem plura dona perpetuo obtulit possidenda, tam provincias, quam civitates, seu castra et cetera territoria, imo et patrimonia quae a perfida Longobardorum gente detinebantur, brachio forti eidem Dei apostolo restituit, cuius et iure esse dignoscebantur': Mansi, vol. 12, cols 1075A–1076B.

22 'Porro et hoc vestrum a Deo coronatum ac piissimum poscimus imperium: ut si veram et orthodoxam sanctae catholicae ecclesiae Romanae nitimini amplecti fidem, sicut antiquitus ab orthodoxis imperatoribus, seu a caeteris Christianis fidelibus oblata atque concessa sunt patrimonia beati Petri apostolorum principis, fautoris vestri, in integrum nobis restituere dignemini pro luminariorum concinnatoribus eidem Dei ecclesiae, atque alimoniis pauperum. Imo et consecrationes archiepiscoporum, seu episcoporum, sicut olitana constat traditio, nostrae dioecesis existentes penitus canonice sanctae Romanae nostrae restituantur ecclesiae, ut nequaquam schisma inter concordiam perseverare valeat sacerdotum, sicut in vestra serenissima iussione exaratum est': Mansi, vol. 12, col. 1073A.

23 *Epistolae selectae*, no. 1, 4.
24 See Dvornik 1933, 248–83; Pavan 1986–1987; Sirago 1999; Scheibelreiter 2005, 684–85. See also Lučić 1995.
25 On the diplomatic activity of the Holy See, see Bougard 2011.

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17 Dalmatian bishops at the Council of Nicaea in 787 and the status of the Dalmatian church in the eighth and ninth centuries

Predrag Komatina

It is well known that bishops from what was then Byzantine Dalmatia – John of Split, Ursus of Rab, Lawrence of Osor and John of Kotor – were present at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787.[1] Their presence is often used to support the argument that Dalmatia was one of the western provinces that had been taken from the church of Rome and subordinated to the patriarchate of Constantinople by decree of Emperor Leo III in 732.[2]

The fact remains, however, that the council in question was *ecumenical*, which means that not only suffragans of the patriarch of Constantinople but bishops from every part of the Christian oecumene were invited to participate.[3] Thus, although most of those present at Nicaea were indeed suffragans of the Constantinopolitan patriarch, the presence of the bishops of Dalmatia does not necessarily mean that they were, too.[4] It was a well-established tradition for envoys and legates of the three eastern patriarchs – Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem – to attend church councils, and Brothers John and Thomas attended in this capacity.[5] The autocephalous church of Cyprus was also represented by its archbishop and a number of bishops.[6] The church of Rome was officially represented by two papal legates, both named Peter (an archbishop and an abbot of the Monastery of St Sabas), among many other representatives.[7] The most interesting case is the presence of Epiphanius, a deacon of Catania in Sicily, as the representative of Thomas, archbishop of Sardinia.[8] Sardinia in the late eighth century was by no means completely under papal jurisdiction, but was a part of the Byzantine empire. Politically, Dalmatia was also undisputedly Byzantine territory at the time.[9] However, the presence of our bishops raises the question of the ecclesiastical pertinence of political affiliation. Were the four Dalmatian bishops at the Council of Nicaea representatives of the church of Rome or of Constantinople?

To answer this question, we will examine the role of the Dalmatian bishops at the council, as well as the place of their signatures in council protocols. Our bishops were not present from the start: their attendance is first recorded in the fourth session, where their signatures are found in the session protocols among the autocephalous archbishops of the patriarch of Constantinople.[10] This sequence of signatures starts with the bishops of Bizye and Pompeiopolis and ends with those of Mesembria, Derkon and Amorion, who are listed as autocephalous archbishops in the *Notitiae episcopatuum* of the Constantinopolitan church from the eighth or

early ninth centuries.[11] Similarly, three of our bishops from Dalmatia appear in the protocols of the seventh session of the council among the autocephalous archbishops.[12] Here they are joined by John of Kotor, whose signature appears at the very end of the list, among the bishops of lower rank.[13]

The protocols of the fourth and the seventh session of the council clearly suggest that the bishops of Split, Rab and Osor held a position among the autocephalous archbishops of the Constantinopolitan church. This would mean that they were directly subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople and not to the metropolitans of their respective provinces, making their rank above that of ordinary bishop. However, since they were not metropolitans themselves and had no bishops under their rule, their rank was lower than that of metropolitan.[14]

The fact that our Dalmatian bishops were placed among the autocephalous archbishops in the council protocols does not imply, however, that they actually were autocephalous archbishops. Out of all the *Notitiae episcopatuum*, *Notitia* 2, composed between 805 and 814, is closest in time to the council of 787;[15] yet this *Notitia* has no record of our Dalmatian bishops in the list of Constantinopolitan autocephalous archbishops.[16] The reason why our three Dalmatian bishops appear where they do in the protocols of the fourth and the seventh sessions at Nicaea is not their actual place in the hierarchy, but rather the lack of it: these bishops were not part of the Constantinopolitan church and had no exact rank among its clergy. So their place in the order of precedence was uncertain. Listing them among the autocephalous archbishops was an *ad hoc* solution to avoid either insulting the guests from the west, or exalting them above their importance.[17]

The Cypriot bishops were a similar case. The island's metropolitan, the bishop of Constantia, regularly featured third among the metropolitans of the Constantinopolitan church in session protocols, after Caesarea and Ephesus but before Heraclea, Ancyra and Cyzicus.[18] Yet his suffragan bishops' position varied by session: sometimes they were placed after the suffragans of Heraclea, sometimes after those of Ancyra, and sometimes after the suffragans of Ephesus, depending on the place of their metropolitan in the hierarchy.[19] Jean Darrouzès points out the reason for this: due to the autocephaly of their church, the bishops of Cyprus were less familiar with the order of precedence at councils, which was strictly determined by the *Notitiae episcopatuum*.[20] In other words, the Cypriot bishops' position was not precisely determined in the order of precedence of the Constantinopolitan church, because they did not come under the patriarchate's jurisdiction.

I would suggest that the position of our three bishops from Dalmatia at Nicaea in 787 is similar. The clue comes from the final protocol, a list of episcopal signatures at the council's *horos* (rule), adopted after the seventh session.[21] Here our three bishops are to be found in a different position from that of the fourth and seventh sessions, accentuating the resemblance between their position and that of the bishops from Cyprus. The signatures of the Dalmatian bishops in the *horos* are no longer among the autocephalous archbishops: they are placed formally lower, with a clearer distinction drawn between them and those bishops included in the Constantinopolitan hierarchy. Although our three Dalmatian bishops signed the *horos* among the ordinary suffragan bishops of the Constantinopolitan

metropolitans, they are nevertheless to be found among the suffragans of the highest-ranking metropolitans. They signed immediately after the suffragans of the metropolitans of Caesarea and Ephesus,[22] and were followed by the five bishops of Cyprus,[23] and then by the suffragans of the metropolitans of Heraclea, Ancyra and others.[24] As noted, the Cypriot archbishop of Constantia appeared consistently in third place among his fellow metropolitans throughout the council sessions: after Caesarea and Ephesus, but before Heraclea, Ancyra and Cyzicus.[25] At no point do our three Dalmatian bishops appear among the metropolitans, suggesting that the bishop of Split had yet to attain official recognition of the ancient privileges of the church of Salona and primacy over the bishops of Dalmatia. His status is all the more interesting because he is obviously accepted as bishop of Salona – he appears as 'the bishop of the Salonitans' in all the council acts – and is always placed first of the three.[26]

To sum up, when signing the *horos* of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, our three Dalmatian bishops appear after the suffragans of the metropolitans of Caesarea and Ephesus, but before those of Heraclea, as do the bishops of Cyprus. It seems reasonable to suggest that the bishops from these two provinces appear where they do for the same reason: neither province belonged to the Constantinopolitan hierarchy at the time. Yet their positions differed: the church of Cyprus was truly autocephalous, that is, independent of patriarchates, whereas the church of Dalmatia was clearly still considered to be part of the ancient church of Rome.

Table 17.1 overleaf illustrates the order of bishops' signatures in the relevant parts of the *horos*. It is an extended and more detailed version of the table by Lujo Margetić.[27]

Information from the twelfth-century chronicler Michael the Syrian about the presence of bishops from Dalmatia at the Iconoclast Council of Hieria in 754 is sometimes used to argue that the church of Dalmatia was already part of the patriarchate of Constantinople in the mid-eighth century.[28] However, the contemporary evidence from the Council of Nicaea discussed above, together with Ivan Basić's thorough examination of this issue, calls into question this late source.[29] Some scholars have also suggested that the church of Dalmatia was subordinated to the patriarch of Constantinople after the Treaty of Aachen in 812, whereby the Franks are thought to have recognized Byzantine rule over Dalmatia and, in return, the Byzantines recognized Frankish dominion over the Croats in the Dalmatian hinterland. For example, Antun Dabinović concludes that the treaty 'gave the Byzantines political rule of Dalmatia, and it also gave the Byzantine patriarch ecclesiastical rule over the Dalmatian church'.[30] This conclusion, however, can be challenged on various grounds. Even before the treaty, Dalmatia was considered to be Byzantine territory (the treaty was merely official recognition of this fact), yet the church of Dalmatia was not then subordinate to Constantinople. Nor did the Franks have the right to renounce papal claims to jurisdiction over the bishops of Dalmatia.

There is further evidence that the church of Dalmatia was not part of the church of Constantinople in the first half of the ninth century. No Dalmatian bishop is mentioned in any of the *Notitiae episcopatuum* issued in this period, namely *Notitiae* 2, 4, 5 and 6. *Notitiae* 4, 5 and 6, which all, in my opinion, date from between

Table 17.1 The order of bishops' signatures in the *horos* of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)

Group	Place of signature	Rank of metropolitan (within the hierarchy of the patriarchate of Constantinople) according to the *Notitiae episcopatuum*)
Legates of Pope Hadrian I	1–2	
Patriarch Tarasios of Constantinople	3	
Legates of the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem	4–5	
Metropolitan of Caesarea (Cappadocia)	6	1st
Metropolitan of Ephesus (Asia)	7	2nd
Metropolitan of Constantia (Cyprus)	8	
Metropolitan of Heraclea in Thrace (Europe)	9	3rd
Other metropolitans of the patriarchate of Constantinople	10–39	
Autocephalous archbishops (including the bishops of Sicily and Calabria)	40–81 (44–58)	
Bishops of Cappadocia (under the metropolitan of Caesarea)	82–85	1st
Bishops of Asia (under the metropolitan of Ephesus)	86–111	2nd
Bishops of Dalmatia	112–114	
Bishops of Cyprus	115–119	
Bishops of Europe (under the metropolitan of Heraclea)	120–132	3rd
Other bishops under the metropolitans of the patriarchate of Constantinople	133–309	

806 and 838,[31] have a separate list for the western provinces taken from the church of Rome, with a special note on this event.[32] These lists contain no reference to any of the bishops of Dalmatia.

While Croatia came under Frankish sway after the Treaty of Aachen in 812, the Byzantines showed little interest in subordinating the Dalmatian church to the patriarch of Constantinople until later in the century. Under Emperor Basil I (867–886), however, it became part of a broader plan to expand the boundaries of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, devised by the Byzantine political and ecclesiastical elite following the major missionary successes and internal religious homogenization of the 860s and 870s.[33] Once Basil had acquired political control over Croatia in 870 and successfully removed the Frankish threat from the borders of Dalmatia, he used his undisputed authority to subordinate both the churches of Dalmatia and Croatia to the patriarchate of Constantinople.[34]

Based on contemporary evidence in council documents and the *Notitiae*, which reflect the ecclesiastical hierarchy and affiliations of the time, it is justifiable to

conclude that in the eighth and ninth centuries the church of Dalmatia was not part of the church of Constantinople. Our ninth-century evidence also shows that Basil's efforts were closely observed by the Holy See. As early as 872/873, Pope John VIII (872–882) warned the Croatian prince Domagoj to be wary of 'Graeca falsitas', which could deprive the Roman church of Dalmatia and Croatia as it had already done with Bulgaria in 870.[35] However, the first decisive measure did not come until the reign of Zdeslav (878–879), a client prince of Basil. In a letter written on 7 June 879 to the Croatian prince Branimir, who had overthrown Zdeslav some months before, John VIII praises the new prince for *returning* to obedience to the Holy See.[36] In another letter, from 10 June 879, John writes to the Dalmatian clergy, inviting their bishops to return to the church of Rome and claiming that they should receive ordination only from the pope.[37] Thus, Basil's bid was short-lived, and by 879 the church of Dalmatia and Croatia was back in the fold of Rome, where it remains to this day.[38]

Notes

1 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 140E, 141A, 368A–B, 373A, 388B; Darrouzès 1975, 24–25, 59–60 and 62–68 for the lists of those present at Nicaea, in which see nos 62D, 61E, 106F (Split); nos 72D, 71E, 107F (Rab); nos 77D, 76E, 108F (Osor); and no. 327E (Kotor); Lamberz 2004, 48, 50, 78; Katičić 1993.

2 On the imperial decree of 732, its causes and consequences, see Theoph., 404, lines 1–9; 408, lines 21–25; 409 lines 7–18; 410, lines 4–17; 413, lines 4–8. Further excellent studies include Grumel 1952; Anastos 1957; Prigent 2004. Scholars who have argued that Dalmatia was removed from papal jurisdiction and subordinated to the Constantinopolitan church by the decree of 732 include Šišić 1925, 681–89; and more recently, Katičić 1993, 25–29; Goldstein 1995, 131; Prlender 1998, 4–6; and Živković 2004, 56–57. In contrast, others have suggested that the church of Dalmatia was not part of the church of Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries: Košćak 1980–1981; Margetić 1983, 261–64, 268–70, 284–85; Margetić 2000, 136–38. For further scholarship on this subject, see Basić 2014, 154 n. 8.

3 According to Theophanes (Theoph., 461, lines 12–13), Constantine VI (780–797) and Irene (797–802) ordered that 'all the bishops under their rule come to the Council' at a time when the boundaries of imperial rule clearly exceeded those of the patriarchate of Constantinople (see also the chapter by Betti in this volume). Vladimir Košćak (1980–1981, 298–300) argues that only suffragans of the Constantinopolitan patriarch attended the Council of Nicaea in 787, and excludes the bishops of Dalmatia from this category, ignoring the evidence of their presence at the council. In support of his argument that all those present in Nicaea were suffragans of the patriarch, Radoslav Katičić quotes a line in a letter from Patriarch Tarasios to Pope Hadrian I after the council, which states that Nicaea was attended by 'all the God-loving bishops of this diocese' (i.e. Constantinople): Mansi, vol. 13, col. 459B; cited in Katičić 1993, 27–28, For counter-arguments, see Margetić 1983, 252; Margetić 2000, 137–38. Lujo Margetić suggests that Dalmatia was not then part of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate; but since he distinguishes between the patriarch's authority in a 'broader' and 'narrower' sense, he allows – incorrectly, in my view – for the possibility that the church of Dalmatia might have been under patriarchal authority in the 'broader sense', that is, as a territory under the political influence of the empire.

4 Darrouzès 1975, esp. 62–68.

5 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 994A, 1051C, 1086C, 1114B–C; vol. 13, cols 133C–D, 157B, 204B, 365B, 380C–D.

 6 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 994A–B, 995C, 1087C–D, 1099D–E, 1147A–B; vol. 13, cols 133E, 144A–B, 365B, 368D–E, 380E, 388B.
 7 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 991E–994A, 1051B, 1083E–1086A, 1086C, 1114B, 1146C–D; vol. 13, cols 133B–C, 157B, 204B, 365A, 380C.
 8 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 994B, 1090D, 1150C–D; vol. 13, cols 136B–C, 365B, 381C–D.
 9 On the political status of Byzantine Dalmatia from the seventh to the ninth century, see Ferluga 1978, 87–164; *BJ*; Prigent 2008, 408–17.
10 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 140E, 141A. See also Darrouzès 1975, 24–25; Margetić 1983, 262; Margetić 2000, 150–52; Katičić 1993, 27–29.
11 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 140D–141B; *Notitiae* 1, nos 39–72; 2, nos 42–87. On the precise dating of *Notitia* 2, to between 805 and 814, see P. Komatina 2009, 29 n. 8.
12 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 368A–B.
13 Mansi, vol. 13, col. 373A.
14 Katičić 1993, 28–29; Margetić 2000, 150–51; P. Komatina 2009, 39–40; P. Komatina 2013, 198 n. 21.
15 P. Komatina 2009, 29 n. 8.
16 *Notitiae* 2, nos 42–87.
17 Margetić 1983, 262. Margetić (2000, 150–52) notes that the Dalmatian bishops occupied unusually high places among the autocephalous archbishops in these protocols, and attributes this to the 'political wisdom' of Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical circles. But he ignores the fact that they were foreign to the patriarchate's well-established hierarchy and that finding a suitable place for them in the rankings could not have been an easy task. He compares our Dalmatian bishops' position in the protocols to that of the bishops of southern Italy and Sicily, yet the latter were already part of the Constantinopolitan hierarchy by 787, although their position was not precisely determined at that point. As we shall see, a comparison between the Dalmatian bishops' position at Nicaea and that of the autocephalous bishops of Cyprus is more helpful.
18 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 994A–B, 1087C–D, 1147A–B; vol. 13, cols 133E, 365B, 380E.
19 Mansi, vol. 12, cols 995C, 1099D–E; vol. 13, cols 144A–B, 368D–E, 388B.
20 Darrouzès 1975, 31–32.
21 Margetić (2000, 151–52) also emphasizes the importance of the list at the end of the *horos* as the best indicator of the place the Dalmatian bishops held at the council.
22 Mansi, vol. 13, col. 388B.
23 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 388B–C.
24 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 388C–389C. For the hierarchical sequence of the metropolitans of the Constantinopolitan church, which was also applied to their suffragan bishops, see *Notitiae* 1, nos 6–8, 73–122; 2, nos 1–3, 88–141; 4, nos 6–8, 82–131; 5, nos 1–3; 6, nos 1–3; 7, nos 1–3, 103–69; 8, nos 1–3; 9, nos 1–65; 10, nos 1–66; 11, nos 1–3; 12, nos 1–3; 13, nos 1–70.
25 Mansi, vol. 13, col. 380E.
26 See also Katičić 1993, 28. For the status of the bishop of Split among the bishops of Dalmatia between the seventh and tenth centuries, as well as his metropolitan pretensions, see Prozorov 2012; I. Komatina 2016, 51–58.
27 Margetić 2000, 152, with special thanks to Ivan Basić, who made it available to me. See also the useful table in Lamberz 2004, 18.
28 Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, vol. 2, 520–21.
29 Basić (2014, 149–60) argues that the very stylized nature of Michael's account implies that Dalmatia was not an integral part of the patriarchate of Constantinople in 754, rather than proving the opposite. However, his conclusion that the information in Michael's account is completely irrelevant to the ecclesiastical history of Dalmatia rests on the assumption that 'Dalmatia' here refers to the Byzantine possessions around the Ionian Sea (including the Ionian islands, parts of Epirus and Albania and possibly even Dioclea): *ibid.*, 160–92. This hypothesis, although elaborately presented, remains speculative.
30 Dabinović 1930, 218–23.

31 P. Komatina 2013.
32 *Notitiae* 4, nos 39, 483–92; 5, nos 34–43; 6, nos 37–46.
33 P. Komatina 2014, 134–211, 236–319.
34 P. Komatina 2014, 318–19.
35 *Fragmenta registri Iohannis VIII. papae*, 278, lines 14–18; *Codex diplomaticus*, 9.
36 *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, 152, lines 4–40; *Codex diplomaticus*, 14–15.
37 *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, 157, lines 1–38; *Codex diplomaticus*, 16–17.
38 There can be little doubt that the Dalmatian clergy responded positively to the pope's invitation, as is obvious from subsequent events. For example, in 886/887, Bishop Theodosius of Nin in Croatia, who had been ordained in Rome by Pope John VIII in 880 (see *Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae*, 258, lines 1–27; *Codex diplomaticus*, 18–19), usurped the episcopal see of Split after the death of its previous bishop Marin, being consecrated by Patriarch Walpert of Aquileia (*Fragmenta registri Stephani V. papae*, 338, lines 9–23, 346, lines 16–29; *Codex diplomaticus*, 20–21). Although Pope Stephen V (885–891) at first criticized them both for overstepping their rightful authority, in 888 he nevertheless promised Theodosius his *pallium* if he came to Rome in person (*Fragmenta registri Stephani V. papae*, 351, lines 9–18; *Codex diplomaticus*, 22; I. Komatina 2016, 55–57). Thus, by the late ninth century, the affairs of the episcopal see of Split were clearly the concern of the bishops of Nin and Aquileia, both subordinated to Rome, and of the pope himself. Such a development would not have been possible had the church of Split and other cities in Dalmatia still been subject to the patriarch of Constantinople.

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18 New evidence for the re-establishment of the Adriatic dioceses in the late eighth century

Ivan Basić

Introduction

When Obelerius, Bishop of Olivolo, an island in the Venetian lagoon, died in 798, a sixteen-year-old Greek by the name of Christopher was recommended as the new bishop by the local representatives of the central Byzantine administration. The importance of this event to the ruling classes of the duchy of Venice can be seen from the *Chronicle* of Andrea Dandolo, which records that Christopher was nominated for the post by the Venetian doge John and his son and co-ruler Maurice II.[1] These top Venetian officials approached the patriarch of Grado, as the relevant ecclesiastical authority, and requested canonical consent for Christopher's election. However, he refused to grant it and, as this chapter will demonstrate, his refusal paved the way for subsequent upheavals.

Among all the twists and turns resulting from this dispute over the episcopal see of Olivolo, it is important to note that, according to long-standing practice, the right to nominate a bishop within a given province was the prerogative of the local Byzantine representative (in this case, the doge). But canonical consent for a candidate was the prerogative of the metropolitan, as his ecclesiastical superior – in this case, the patriarch of Grado. A successful election was thus only possible if the expectations and jurisdictions of all the interested parties converged, and this meant that even the wishes of imperial representatives were sometimes overridden.[2] The whole process of electing and enthroning the bishop, described in Dandolo's *Chronicle*, delineates a complex relationship between the semi-autonomous political formations developing in the Venetian lagoon and the Byzantine empire as their ancient parent body.

The undoubted significance of the events in this remote military and administrative unit of the empire can only be interpreted correctly in light of the general situation in 798. The failed attempt to anoint Christopher as bishop occurred at a moment when relations were strained between key representatives of what one might term the 'conservative faction' of the Venetian political elite and those favouring Frankish intervention in the internal politics of Byzantium's northern Adriatic territories. At the head of the pro-Frankish party was John, patriarch of Grado, for whom the candidate nominated to this important ecclesiastical position would have seemed overtly provocative. As metropolitan, he refused to give

his consent on canonical grounds to the appointment of Christopher as bishop of Olivolo, citing his extreme youth. This could not fail to stir up a reaction: in 802, Doge Maurice II led a campaign to Grado and put John to death.[3] John's relative and successor, Fortunatus of Trieste, continued to refuse to ordain Christopher. In order to understand how this controversy arose in the first place, what diocesan and jurisdictional overlaps were involved, and how they came to be, we need to look back to the last decades of the sixth century. The events discussed and reinterpreted here should help establish the context necessary for understanding much later events, such as the Treaty of Aachen in 812. Underlying the Frankish-Byzantine dispute and the territorial demarcation of 812 were issues already crystalizing two hundred years earlier. Our chapter will shed light on these problems of jurisdiction and administrative rule by analysing historiographical, art historical and hagiographical sources.

The transition from the sixth to the seventh century was a time of relatively sudden decline in the ecclesiastical organization of the empire's western provinces. Following the Lombards' irruption, the same process was taking place along the western and eastern Adriatic coasts, especially in the north-western segment of the Adriatic. More than half of the early Christian dioceses documented in the Italian peninsula no longer existed by the turn of the seventh century. The situation was also very similar in Spain and Gaul.[4]

In Dalmatia, the barbarian raids and disorder of the early seventh century put an end to both the urban life of Salona and its status as the province's metropolis. According to Thomas of Split, various groups of Salonitan refugees fled first to neighbouring islands and then, led by a certain Severus the Great (*Magnus Severus*), they settled in Diocletian's Palace, the core of the future town of Split. The move was supported by the government in Constantinople, which allowed them to occupy these imperial buildings and regulated their relationships with the neighbouring Slavs. Shortly after the destruction of Salona, the papal legate John of Ravenna arrived at the newly established town of Split. He re-instated the old archbishopric and metropolitan see of Salona there, and also transferred the relics of the Salonitan martyrs, St Domnius and St Anastasius, to the former mausoleum of the emperor Diocletian, which thus became the Cathedral of Split.

This is the mid-seventeenth-century narrative wrought by Ivan Lučić Lucius (1604–1679). The account became common among later historiography dealing with the creation and rise of the church of Split and other churches on the eastern Adriatic. This narrative has exerted a profound influence on the overall perception of events and continues to be widely accepted, with certain additions and alterations, in many scholarly publications. A detailed analysis of the historiography is beyond our scope here.[5] Instead, we will attempt to explain why the founding of the eastern Adriatic bishoprics should be seen in a different social and chronological context – namely that of the late eighth century – sustaining our thesis with a critical examination of the sources; archaeological and art-historical evidence; and comparison with regional, Adriatic and pan-Mediterranean contexts.

Generally speaking, our primary sources are scarce. Among them, the earliest and chronologically closest to the events is the *Liber pontificalis*, recounting the

Figure 18.1 Archbishop John's sarcophagus from the Church of St Matthew, now in the Baptistery of St John in Split (photo: Zoran Alajbeg)

mission of a certain Abbot Martin who gathered relics and ransomed prisoners in Dalmatia and Istria in 641.[6] Other sources include Chapter 31 of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos' *De administrando imperio*; the chapters of Thomas of Split's chronicle *Historia Salonitana* dealing with the origins of Split and its first archbishop;[7] the Gospel Book of Split (*Evangeliarium Spalatense*); and finally, a group of artworks, especially a sarcophagus inscribed with the name of John, archbishop of Split.[8]

In keeping with the long-established scholarly narrative mentioned above historians have tended to conflate the information about Abbot Martin's journey with Thomas' account of John of Ravenna, the first archbishop of Split. Both were then linked to the *De administrando*'s record of the priests reportedly sent from Rome to Dalmatia by Emperor Heraclius (610–641) who, in turn, were responsible for the conversion of the neighbouring Slavs and Croats.[9] Based on this, it was generally accepted that the metropolitan see of Salona was re-instated in nearby Split in the mid-seventh century, with John of Ravenna at its head. According to this interpretation, the pope who sent John as his legate to Dalmatia was John IV (640–642), himself of Dalmatian origin and the same pope who sent Abbot Martin on his mission. Although the pope in question is unnamed in Thomas' *Historia Salonitana*, the overall context of the events seemed to imply that they occurred in the seventh century, while the refugees from conquered Salona were still alive. Although the accounts of these events did not explicitly link John IV to John of Ravenna, this was the prevalent view in our early historiography.

In the 1970s a new source for the earliest ecclesiastical history of medieval Dalmatia emerged: the acts of the ecumenical council held at Nicaea in 787, which mention the bishops of 'Salona', Osor, Rab and Kotor.[10] This was the first solid

piece of information after the secure dating of Abbot Martin's activities in Dalmatia and Istria in 641, some 150 years earlier. In the development of ecclesiastical centres in the eastern Adriatic during the seventh and eighth centuries, the years 641 and 787 remain the only dates that are uncontested, and this is the time frame within which our scholarly debates are situated.

The shortcomings of our literary sources

A modern critical approach to our sources necessitates analysis of their genre and narrative nature, and of how they relate to known historical data. We first need to identify the literary genre chosen for the composition of any given text. In the case of Thomas of Split, for example, this is the *gesta episcoporum*. In this context, John of Ravenna and his pious translation of St Domnius' relics becomes a vehicle for *renovatio*. This genre-specific component of the *gesta episcoporum* serves to establish a new sequence of bishops in the meta-narrative, the component which guarantees continuity and acts as a link between the old world and a new era.[11]

The analysis of Thomas' work carried out some fifteen years ago by Mirjana Matijević Sokol demonstrates that Thomas either does not want – or does not know when – to date John of Ravenna's appearance, nor does he mention which pope dispatched John to Dalmatia. Furthermore, in describing the renovation of Salona's ecclesiastical organization in Split, which Thomas could only view in terms of a metropolitan see, he uses the multivalent and neutral term 'archbishop' instead of 'metropolitan'. Lastly, when Thomas does attempt to illustrate the status of the church of Split at that time, he points out that it was granted to Archbishop John 'by the Apostolic See that the church of Split would have all the privileges and honours that Salona had formerly enjoyed'.[12] This vague and simplified remark seems to refer to Split's metropolitan rank, but lacks any further detail.

Thomas attempts to compile and synchronize a variety of records from different periods. It is clear that he tries to establish a chronological link between his information about Severus the Great and the first distinguished occupants of Diocletian's Palace, and his information about Archbishop John of Ravenna, and that he borrows the latter from a source which differs in terms of genre, content and time of writing. Thomas interpolates the account of John of Ravenna into an older record about Severus, and deliberately avoids giving dates because of the potential for contradictions.

Information from our second source, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos' *De administrando imperio*, should be seen in light of recent research, especially the work of Florin Curta, which clarifies the role of Emperor Heraclius. Chapter 31 portrays Heraclius as initiating the 'conversion of the Croats and the Serbs': the emperor personifies the Byzantine mission to civilize barbaric nations, which at that time was inextricably linked with their entry into the Christian oecumene. Yet we have no indication that the imperial writer drew on any local *origo gentis* narrative of the Croats' conversion to Christianity, nor that Heraclius directed any missionary activity outside Byzantine territory. The inclusion of the Croats into a hierarchical world order, supposedly undertaken by Heraclius, was part

of Byzantine propaganda aiming to further imperial ambitions and claims in the western Balkans.[13] In essence, this episode in Chapter 31 of the *De administrando* is a pseudo-historical ideological construct. How the early medieval Salonitan-Split archdiocese actually rose to metropolitan rank has been well researched and clearly explained in modern historiography. It was only established as an ecclesiastical province with a metropolitan at its head by the two church councils held at Split in 925 and 928.[14]

According to Matijević Sokol:

> Thomas collated all the records known to him and [. . .] presented the two renovation processes as a single one. He intended to support the local ecclesiastical tradition at Split, which wanted to see itself as direct heir to the metropolitan see of Salona, without any gaps in time. This is why he portrayed it as already having been renovated in the seventh century.[15]

The same could be said of the sources and historical facts described above. The first process included the renovation of religious life after the destruction of Salona and the establishment of an early medieval bishopric at Split, while the second process related to the battle of this re-established bishopric for the old metropolitan rights of the Salonitan archdiocese, which only ended in the tenth century. Thus Thomas the Archdeacon back-dated the creation of the metropolitan see of Split in a seemingly unified narrative by linking it to the restoration of religious life at diocesan level within Diocletian's Palace. Although this process occurred much earlier than the tenth century, it does not seem to have taken place as early as the seventh.

New or restored bishoprics on the northern Adriatic

In the mid- to late eighth century there was a sudden proliferation in the number of bishoprics throughout the northern Adriatic basin. The first to be founded, in 756, was the bishopric of Capodistria (Koper), followed somewhat later, but before 776, by a bishopric at Novigrad (Cittanova) and in 774–775 the bishopric at Olivolo. Why were these bishoprics founded, or rather restored? In all three cases, they invoked an older tradition. The two Istrian bishoprics based their legitimacy on the brief existence of precursors in these towns around 600, during an extraordinary politico-religious period.[16] The fact that both Capodistria and Novigrad were home to early Christian ecclesiastical organizational units, however briefly, is particularly important, and we shall return to this issue later.

The only testimony to the restoration of the bishopric of Capodistria in the eighth century is Dandolo's *Chronicle*, which dates this to early in the office of Vitalianus, patriarch of Grado (755–766).[17] Around 756, the people and clergy of Capodistria sought permission from Pope Stephen II (752–757) to establish a bishopric in their town. They elected a certain John as their bishop and obtained consent from the patriarch of Grado, who then ordained him. The newly appointed suffragan bishop duly paid homage to his metropolitan, Vitalianus. Dandolo's

account describes in detail how a bishop was elected, confirmed and ordained with the consent of the Holy See. Although both the Istrian bishoprics were established on Byzantine territory, they nevertheless came under the ecclesiastical authority of Rome from the start.

When Maurice 'episcopus Histriensis' was sent to Novigrad in Istria around 776–780, with a papal mandate to gather Peter's Pence there, he met a dire fate. The Istrian *Graeci* accused Maurice of trying to hand over their territory to the Franks and blinded him in the course of his duties.[18] The abuse inflicted on the bishop prompted Pope Hadrian I to write to Charlemagne, asking him to save Maurice from the irate Greeks and suggesting that his local agent Marcarius, duke of Friuli, should intervene in the case. It is clear from this incident that the ecclesiastical hierarchy and political establishment were almost inseparable in the eyes of all involved. It also demonstrates the extent to which elites along the many borders between Byzantium, Venice and the Franks during the late 770s regarded the interests of the Carolingians and the papal curia as synonymous. The very fact that a bishop was collecting Peter's Pence across the Istrian peninsula made him suspicious in the eyes of the local Byzantine authority (the *Graeci*), and thus the collection of the usual papal levies was perceived as overtly provocative.

The whole affair clearly indicates that significant attention was given to the role and importance of the clergy as precursors to military and political expansion. Equally, the request that Pope Hadrian addressed to Charlemagne – to reinstate the bishop to his see at Novigrad – is a clear sign how the Roman curia meddled in jurisdictional issues in regions where disputes were rife. The territory in question did not *de iure* belong to the Carolingians at this point; rather, this was an attempt to gain control before launching an actual campaign, using 'a peaceful approach, by relying on papal authority, and by negotiations and diplomatic activities with the aim of obtaining leverage with the help of religious dignitaries'.[19]

The canonical establishment of the bishopric on the Venetian island of Olivolo took a slightly different route.[20] It seems to have been founded in 774–775 with the consent of Pope Hadrian I and John, patriarch of Grado, as a reflection of the growing political importance of this island in relation to the traditional seats of government, Heraclea and Malamocco. The first bishop, Obelerius, was appointed by Doge Maurice I, a layman, and ordained by the patriarch of Grado: thus the predecessor of the ill-fated Christopher took office at an opportune moment, when 'Venetian' and papal policy were in harmony. The creation of the bishopric at Olivolo in the last few decades of the eighth century reflected the advanced, autonomous position of Venice within the Byzantine empire. It was the first real bishopric to be created through the efforts of the Venetian elite: other bishoprics in the region were not of markedly 'Venetian' origin, but rather predated the medieval commune and were of 'foreign' origin.[21] As Olivolo grew, the importance of a number of much older bishoprics in the lagoons gradually declined.

The bishoprics at Olivolo, Capodistria and Novigrad are excellent examples of ecclesiastical units which, although founded in territory nominally Byzantine, were not required to submit themselves in any way to the jurisdiction of the

Constantinopolitan patriarch. We have reliable records which indicate that these bishoprics were founded under papal aegis and that they were permanently and tightly subject to Rome. In this sense, the bishoprics disprove the traditional view that ecclesiastical and political borders in the Byzantine Adriatic territories were congruent. They also provide convincing parallels for events in Dalmatia at the same time, where imperial representatives did not obstruct the foundation of bishoprics which were also subject to Rome.

One indication that Dalmatian cities in the second half of the eighth century recognized Byzantine authority both nominally and in reality is an inscription from Trogir, which mentions an emperor by the name of Constantine, most probably Constantine VI (780–797).[22] Political loyalty – or otherwise – towards the Byzantine emperor should not be confused with ecclesiastical jurisdiction, nor with matters pertaining to Christian doctrine. Thus the appearance of bishops in Dalmatia who owed their allegiance to Rome does not contradict the political attachment of their episcopal cities to the empire.

Although, as we have already seen, the Venetian elite were instrumental in founding the bishopric of Olivolo, it is clear that its creation was not an obstacle to cordial relations between Rome, Venice and Grado. Our sources show that this new ecclesiastical unit was established peacefully and without disruption and, indeed, that it had the pope's approval. During the brief Lombard resurgence in Istria in 770, John, patriarch of Grado, sought the pope's aid against the territorial pretensions of King Desiderius. Stephen III (768–772) responded to the patriarch's request, and although he was not slow to assert papal rights over Venice and Istria,[23] relations between the Venetian elite and the Holy See were good. In the late 790s, however, the issues around the election of a new bishop of Olivolo damaged relations between the Venetians and their metropolitan at Grado.

Grado was another important ecclesiastical unit located within the Byzantine empire which had never belonged to the patriarchate of Constantinople. From 802 onwards it was administered by Fortunatus II, and in 803, the new patriarch received confirmation of his metropolitan rank over Istria from Charlemagne at Salz, being addressed as 'Venetiarum et Istriensium patriarcha'.[24] This confirmation, issued in front of envoys sent by Emperor Nikephoros I (802–811), was a deliberate act of Frankish sponsorship over a 'Byzantine' metropolitan see, and clearly points to the one-sided nature of Frankish interference in the ecclesiastical administration of Byzantium's Adriatic territories.

A relocated bishop in the central Adriatic: Salona-Split and Archbishop John

In contrast to the relative abundance of records for the northern Adriatic bishoprics, there is almost complete silence when it comes to those farther south. Local episcopal lists and other texts – both internal and external – contain no reliable or verifiable information about any of the bishops in the Byzantine towns of northern and central Dalmatia from the late sixth to the late eighth centuries. To date, the

only known record is that of 754, which mentions unnamed bishops 'from Dalmatia' attending the iconoclastic Council of Hieria.[25]

We can only surmise what the relocation to new settlements and the revival of urban life in Dalmatia may have looked like in this dark period. Our only detailed narrative comes from Thomas of Split, while brief accounts can be found in the *De administrando imperio* and the twelfth-century *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*. If one excludes the unreliable elements of Thomas' account, in essence he tells us about the displacement of various patricians from the city of Salona. They fled in different directions, including to nearby islands, only to return some years later. But instead of going back to Salona, they chose to move into the imperial palace of Diocletian or, more precisely, into the fortified settlement of Spalatum which had existed in the palace since the early Christian period.

The dating of the restoration of the Salonitan church at Split, with Archbishop John of Ravenna as its figurehead, has relied primarily on Thomas' association of John with Severus, leader of the Salonitan patricians, and on the traditional dating of these events to around 641. This is the only reliable chronological point in our surviving sources, the *Liber pontificalis* in conjunction with the *De administrando*'s Chapter 31 on Heraclius. We know that the palace of Diocletian had been used as a safe haven once before, during the Gothic Wars, and the gradual relocation of the threatened population to more easily defensible sites was certainly under way before Salona was abandoned for good. Such withdrawals tended to follow a pattern, with senior churchmen taking the relics with them, and the translation occurring once the community had settled into its new seat, having abandoned the old settlement and cult places.[26]

However, our sources suggest that the translation followed a very different path in the case of Salona and Split. The local relics were transferred to Rome in 641, at the behest of Pope John IV, when Abbot Martin ransomed captives and martyrs' relics throughout Dalmatia and Istria, and took the latter to the safety of a purpose-built shrine inside the Lateran baptistery. Regardless of its implications for the ecclesiastical history of the Dalmatian and Istrian towns, our information about Martin's trip indicates that Slav settlement in the eastern Adriatic was now an established fact.[27] The people ransomed by Martin were Christians, captured as booty by pagan Slavs who had evidently been living in the former Byzantine territory for quite some time. In addition, since the pope and Abbot Martin believed that the relics of the Dalmatian and Istrian saints should be housed at Rome, they clearly considered them to have been in serious and imminent danger. Historians tend to merge these events with Thomas' account of the *translatio* performed by John of Ravenna and to assume they all occurred in the mid-seventh century, which becomes the context for the archdiocese of Salona's re-establishment in Diocletian's Palace. But our only reliable information – on Martin's mission – directly contradicts the hypotheses about the continuity and early date of the restoration of the church at Split.

It is impossible to know what happened to the last archbishops of Salona after 600. Religious communities in the coastal enclaves certainly survived, but they did so in rudimentary form and without the power to restore the earlier metropolitan

ecclesiastical network in their new seats. If a Salonitan archbishop did indeed take the saints' relics and move into Diocletian's Palace, his stay there left no permanent trace; and the relics could have passed smoothly into the hands of the papal envoy after the archbishop's death. Another possibility is that the relics remained in Salona, only to be rediscovered later, during Abbot Martin's mission. In either case, the real fate of the relics remained unknown to subsequent generations in Split, leading us to two conclusions: firstly, there was little or no continuity, and secondly, this was why the solemn translation of the relics was organized when ancient Salonitan tradition was needed to guarantee the ecclesiastical primacy of Split. Judging from all this, the *translatio* of the relics to Split Cathedral may have taken place as late as the closing decades of the eighth century.

The legends surrounding the translation of the relics of St Domnius and St Anastasius contain contradictions which indicate that they are not historically accurate and should make us wary of accepting traditional historiography on the matter. However, from the ninth century at latest, certain relics have been proven to be physically present in Split Cathedral, meaning that the arrival of the bodily remains did occur at some point. This leaves open the question of exactly when the archbishops of Split secured these relics to support their ecclesiastical pretensions. Three points help to answer this. Firstly, the earliest examples of the fabrics lining the reliquaries containing them date from the second half of the eighth century and were produced in the Middle East (Fig. 18.2).[28]

Secondly, Split's oldest liturgical book, the Gospel Book of Split (*Evangeliarium Spalatense*), is of similar date and originated in northern Italy, where the church's first archbishop hailed from.[29] And finally, we have at our disposal lists of the bishops who attended the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787 to help us identify who the first archbishop was, and to place him in a convincing historical context.

The Council of Nicaea was attended by the bishops of Rab, Osor, Kotor and 'Salona'. Archbishop John regularly features first among the Dalmatian bishops in attendance, and they are listed among those holding the rank of archbishop, but they are not listed in relation to any metropolitan.[30] Moreover the *Notitiae*
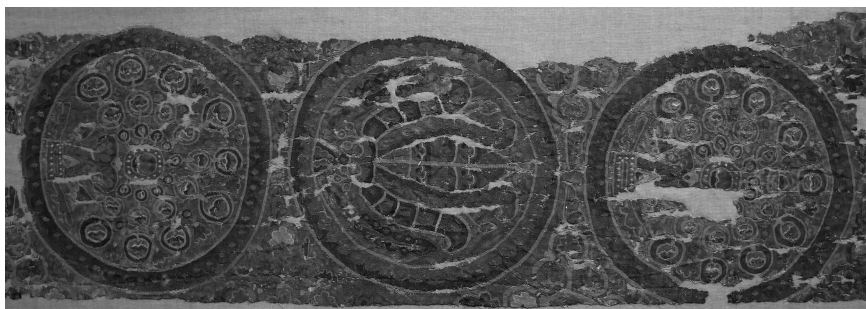
Figure 18.2 Textile fragment found in the reliquary of St Anastasius, Cathedral of St Domnius, Split (photo: Joško Belamarić)

episcopatuum, the eighth- and ninth-century Byzantine lists of bishops under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction, do not mention a single bishopric in Dalmatia. This suggests that ecclesiastical authority over towns such as Rab, Osor and Split, despite their political inclusion in the Byzantine empire, did not lie with the patriarch of Constantinople, but rather with the pope, to whom the province of Dalmatia had belonged without interruption since Late Antiquity.[31]

As is evident from the Council's final, solemn statement of faith (*horos*),[32] the four Dalmatian bishops were not suffragans of a metropolitan. They represented religious communities from a province lacking any ecclesiastical structure above diocesan level. The archbishop of Split had a degree of seniority over the three other bishops mentioned in 787, but not as their metropolitan. His position, as well as the name of his see ('Salona'), shows that the new religious community at Spalatum was slowly growing, aware of its reliance on the Salonitan tradition and its church's reputation, but that it still lacked metropolitan status.

As we have already seen (n. 28), the Council of Nicaea in 787 decreed that altars should contain relics.[33] By the late eighth century, the practice of depositing relics in the altar during the consecration of a church was already widespread across the west. Possibly one of the first things the archbishop of Split did upon his return from Nicaea was to obtain relics for his cathedral. A formal search for the remains of early Christian martyrs was organized; and when the relics of the Salonitan martyrs were translated to Split, they were placed in reliquaries lined with late-eighth-century fabrics of Middle Eastern origin, probably obtained during the archbishop's stay at Nicaea. The translation may thus be seen as the implementation of the iconodule orthodoxy promulgated at Nicaea, which Archbishop John put in practice at local level.

A number of factors lead us to identify John of Ravenna as this earliest recorded prelate of Split, apart from his name and the mention in Thomas' *Historia Salonitana*. They include the archbishop's sarcophagus, which has survived in Split and which features carvings by the city's earliest medieval workshop, as we shall see below. The style of this and several other sarcophagi, as well as the models for these carvings, originated in Rome and north-east Italy, including Ravenna and its surroundings, and also Friuli. From the early ninth century onwards, the lists of the bishops of Split and those of the bishops of other coastal towns become more reliable and are mostly without lacunae, making it possible to verify John's immediate successors in other historical records. From this time onwards, the sequence of the archbishops of Split is confirmed by sources independent of Thomas' chronicle. Our hypothesis is therefore that the see of the archbishop of Salona-Split was left vacant between the early seventh century and the last quarter of the eighth.

After a century and a half of silence, religious and secular leaders of Dalmatia reappear in our written sources. As already noted, the former can be found at Split in 787, in the person of a prelate who had lost metropolitan rights over his former district and retained only the vague title of *archiepiscopus*. Our secular leader appears in Zadar in 805, administering Byzantine Dalmatia's diminished post-Roman territories, first as *archōn*, later as *stratēgos*. The assumption that

the continuity of religious organization between Salona and Split was uninterrupted begs two questions. Firstly, why did it take the archbishop of Split several centuries (until 925) to re-establish his metropolitan supremacy in the region, in comparison with, for example, the patriarch of Aquileia who successfully managed to do the same from Grado, albeit in somewhat different circumstances? Secondly, why did the representatives of the provincial government not relocate to the new seat of Split? One possible answer is that there was a deliberate separation between the regional seat of government and the regional ecclesiastical centre for reasons unknown, while the latter was not granted traditional ecclesiastical primacy, for reasons that are equally unclear. Alternatively there may simply have been no continuity of religious life in the proper sense of the word. In light of the evidence outlined here, the latter explanation seems most plausible.

Analogies in western Europe support this explanation. In this period, episcopal sees could lie vacant for decades, if not for centuries.[34] Even in the case of Italian bishoprics of ancient origin, reliable and uninterrupted episcopal lists are rare.[35] For example, out of sixty north Italian bishoprics, only eighteen managed to keep their episcopal lists; the number is even smaller in the rest of Italy, where only four (including Rome) are complete. Once again, the bishoprics at Novigrad and Capodistria offer good comparisons: having been founded in the sixth century, both were discontinued for a good 150 years and were only canonically restored through papal efforts after the mid-eighth century. It is justifiable to assume that the case of the eastern Adriatic towns was not dissimilar. The contemporary cultural landscape also supports our hypothesis of a significant interruption for most of the seventh and a large part of the eighth century. It was characterized by a dramatic decline in artistic production, poor-quality workmanship and re-use of old structures instead of building new ones.

Evidence from material culture

Archaeological studies throughout Dalmatia suggest little progress in the material culture between the first half of the seventh century and the last decades of the eighth.[36] This changes at the beginning of the ninth century, with the appearance of material traces suggestive of political and social stabilization, a suggestion in key with our written sources. However, in order to substantiate our hypothesis about the late creation of the church in Split, we need to establish what brought about this change.

When evidence of early pre-Romanesque culture appears in late-eighth-century Dalmatia, it does so with speed and quality. The sudden abundance of deluxe artworks – bearing the hallmarks of both early Carolingian art and the ornately carved inscriptions, with stylized vegetal borders, characteristic of Lombard north Italy at this time, a style sometimes termed 'Liutprandian' – is without exception limited to those coastal cities and islands which housed a bishop, and apparently made no inroads inland. Why did this homogeneous cultural sphere suddenly appear in such specific geographical areas?

The Adriatic coast took centre stage in this sudden cultural efflorescence around 800. To assume a direct link between this phenomenon and later Frankish engagement in the region would be premature. Nevertheless, the early-ninth-century Frankish offensive may have been the easier because the Dalmatian coastal towns and their religious leaders had already created a northern Adriatic version of the early Carolingian cultural sphere. The following analysis will seek to justify this hypothesis.

A group of reliefs from the city of Split – some whole, some in fragments (Figs 18.3–18.6) – plays an exceptionally important part in our hypothesis. They were the work of a group of carvers active in late-eighth-century Split, especially in and around the cathedral. Their repetition of a crossed-lilies motif long ago identified this group as belonging to a stone-carving workshop, but this identification has recently been expanded both through new attributions and through broader contextualization.[37]

Based on our knowledge of the workshop's most important patron, John, archbishop of Split, and also on comparative material – especially works from Novigrad in Istria that were commissioned by Maurice, its bishop and a contemporary

Figure 18.3 Chancel screen slab built in the sarcophagus-reliquary of St Domnius, Cathedral of St Domnius, Split (photo: Zoran Alajbeg)

Figure 18.4 Chancel screen slabs from the Cathedral of St Domnius, Split (photo: Ivan
      Basić)

of John – this workshop's carvings can be dated fairly accurately to the last few
decades of the eighth century. However, their Liutprandian style, with peripheral
interlaced ornaments, marks them out as 'foreign' to the Dalmatian coastal cities
in general and to Split in particular. The Liutprandian style apparent in these late-
eighth-century carvings from the Split Cathedral workshop is more likely to have
been due to external factors; comparable reliefs are to be found in north-eastern
Italy, around Ravenna and in the traditional centres of the Lombard kingdom and
Friuli, but also in Rome itself.

The situation in late-eighth-century Istria was similar, where Maurice commis-
sioned a new baptismal ciborium for Novigrad Cathedral (Fig. 18.7). This was a
highly political undertaking and marked the installation of Frankish rule on the
peninsula. Members of the social elite were dispatched to Istria as governors, and
major monuments were built, not in the local style of early Christian origin, but
along Carolingian lines. There is no doubt whatsoever that these innovations were
brought from their homeland by the new elite, members of the highest echelons
of society. The attention paid by this new elite to politico-religious events found
visual form within their churches. The carvings produced by the Split workshop
should be viewed in this context, as it helps to explain the presence of uniform
reliefs decorated with crossed lilies found in the corpus of late-eighth-century
sculpture in Split. These carvings evidently have their roots in northern Italian
sculpture of the same period and cultural milieu, and there is no doubt that they are
Liutprandian in style. Preliminary comparative analysis of the carvings in Novi-
grad and Split shows similarities with sculptures produced in Rome during Pope

Figure 18.5 Chancel screen pilasters found in the Cathedral of St Domnius and its bell tower (Archaeological Museum, Split; after Piteša 2012, no. 4 on 25, no. 11 on 44, nos 12 and 13 on 47; photo: Ante Verzotti)

Figure 18.6 Fragment of a ciborium arcade (Archaeological Museum, Split; after Piteša
2012, no. 50 on 99; photo: Ante Verzotti)

Hadrian I's pontificate (772–795).[38] This is all the more important because we
know that Hadrian had contacts with the Frankish ruler, which may explain how
he was so well informed about Bishop Maurice and the circumstances in Istria.

Given the likelihood that the Split workshop was strongly influenced by north-
ern Italian, and possibly Roman, styles and given the similarities with the situation

Figure 18.7 Fragment of Bishop Maurice's ciborium from the Baptistery of the Cathedral of St Pelagius in Novigrad (Muzej-Museo Lapidarium, Novigrad-Cittanova d'Istria; photo: Zoran Alajbeg)

in Istria, the question remains: who were the leaders of these new religious and social elites, and when did they start to gain influence over local artistic norms, notably the carvings from our workshop? The most logical solution is to associate the reliefs produced by the workshop in Split Cathedral with Archbishop John, who attended the Council at Nicaea in 787. The remodelling of the interior of Split Cathedral corresponds chronologically with the episcopate of John of Ravenna, who re-established the archbishopric of Salona in Split during the last decades of the eighth century.[39] Judging from all the evidence, the sarcophagus decorated with lilies and inscribed with an epitaph belongs to the archbishop. The relief decoration on the front panel is clearly in late-eighth-century Liutprandian style, and it provides a solid basis for identifying the person mentioned in the epitaph of *Iohannes archiepiscopus* as Archbishop John.

Recent research has identified further centres from which the models used by the Split workshop originated, notably almost identical pieces from the Venetian island of Torcello and from Ravenna.[40] This strengthens the argument that there were artistic links between these northern Italian regions and Split, especially in light of John of Ravenna's appointment as the city's first archbishop in the late eighth century.[41] John's position in Split was not unlike that of the bishop of Novigrad between 776 and 780. At this time – and at least eight years before the Frankish conquest of Istria – the bishop of Novigrad unequivocally represented Carolingian interests in the Byzantine-ruled peninsula, despite threats against his person. As archbishop of Split, John probably played a similar role. He was of Ravennate origin, sent by the pope – the legitimate ecclesiastical authority in this trans-Adriatic Byzantine province – in order to carry out a reorganization of the church there.[42] Encouraged by Frankish pretensions in the eastern Adriatic, the pope wanted to consolidate his influence in the Dalmatian towns under Byzantine rule.

It would thus seem that the founder-restorer of the *ecclesia Salonitana* was a late-eighth-century supporter of papal and Frankish political interests in the Adriatic, and that these were implemented mainly via Ravenna and other north Italian centres. It also seems probable that the re-establishment of the Salonitan bishopric at Split was a Roman rather than Byzantine initiative, and that the Holy See followed its own, as well as Carolingian, political interests. John must have been dispatched from Ravenna – the seat of the former exarchate – before 787, a time when its interests in the Adriatic basin coincided with those of Rome and those of the Franks. The attitude of John and other senior churchmen towards Frankish pretensions in Dalmatia in subsequent years should be viewed from this perspective. Although he was sent to Split to restore a bishopric in Byzantine territory, even Constantinople could not question his jurisdictional dependence on the papacy. Co-ordinated political meddling by the pope and the Franks in religious institutions in Byzantine regions was not unusual: there are similar examples in the aforementioned Istrian and Venetian episcopal sees, as well as in the patriarchate of Grado.

The analogies between our reliefs in Split and those produced at the same time by a stone-carving workshop in Kotor, southern Dalmatia, are noteworthy.[43] This workshop produced high-quality carvings during the reigns of Nikephoros I and Leo V (813–820), including two inscriptions which mention a local bishop by the name of John, the first dated to 805, the second to Leo's reign.[44] The earliest known bishop of Kotor is John, mentioned in the acts of the Council of Nicaea (787) as 'Iohannes episcopus Decateron', together with his peers from Osor, Rab and Salona. It is probable that the Bishop John mentioned in our inscription is the same John who attended the Council of Nicaea. Besides the name being the same, the two mentions that we can date to 787 and 805 are relatively close. The office of this bishop also corresponds to the years when the Kotor stone-carving workshop was active, and their carvings are, in turn, stylistically close to other Dalmatian workshops active in the same period.

Thus a visual and stylistic assessment of the relief carvings produced by the Split workshop enables us to place them accurately in a cultural milieu which had indisputable artistic contacts with neighbouring Italy. The stone-carving workshops in Split and Kotor were active at roughly the same time. Importantly, they were in towns on the Adriatic which had only just begun to lay claim to episcopal status; and the main commissioners of carvings from these workshops were the towns' bishops: the same bishops who had taken part in the Council of Nicaea in 787. Their master-carvers drew on models closely linked to late Lombard and early Carolingian visual traditions, characteristic of northern Italian cultural and artistic circles.

Church, *regnum* and sculpture

Besides art historical evidence, these early Frankish contacts with Dalmatia can also be seen in the hagiography of Ursus the Confessor.[45] Although the chronology is tenuous, it seems that Ursus, a Frankish noble, lived in Dalmatia between 779

and 788, the very period which other written sources portray as one of increasing Frankish interest in the Dalmatian lands.[46] According to the *Acta sancti Ursii Confessoris*, religious and missionary embassies under the aegis of the Frankish and papal courts were being sent to the eastern Adriatic as early as the pontificate of Hadrian I. Carolingian political culture associated sacral with political geography, the religious with the secular: the Christian community and its institutions of government were one and the same, the church being a constituent part of the administrative hierarchy. Indeed, as scholars have shown, the term *regnum* was indivisible from the term *ecclesia*.[47] In Mladen Ančić's words, paraphrasing Mayke de Jong, 'the contemporary church, simply put, as a hierarchically organized institution, was an actual part of the state apparatus, that is to say, in that period, ecclesiastical hierarchy was a constituent segment of the political authority'.[48]

Modern scholarship on papal and Frankish political influence in southern Italy points to the significant role played by the rulers of Benevento, as well as the dukes of Spoleto and the abbeys of San Vincenzo al Volturno, Monte Cassino and Farfa.[49] For example, the election of the Frank Theodmar as abbot of Monte Cassino in 778 provided a more solid political and cultural foothold for Carolingian expansion to the south of Rome than any military manoeuvre.[50] A decade later, when Charlemagne sought control over key points in this area, he applied a similar model to the one he had used in Grado: he granted a privilege of immunity to the abbeys of Monte Cassino and Farfa – allowing them freely to elect their abbots – and, in addition, confirmed the estates of Monte Cassino. Such legal and political interventions expressed the Carolingians' clear and unambiguous aspirations in southern Italy, in defiance of traditional Byzantine authority there. Since, as we have seen, high-ranking churchmen were often the main supporters of Frankish aspirations in the Dalmatian coastal towns, the strategy used in southern and northern Italy also seems to have been applied in Dalmatia.[51]

In Dalmatia, the ground for this transition may have been prepared by a pro-Frankish social group who saw advantages in the new political situation. This group included Donatus, bishop of Zadar, and John, bishop of Salona-Split. Given that similar factions existed in neighbouring Venice, Grado and Istria in the late eighth century (led by the Venetian doges Obelerius and Beatus, Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado, and Bishop Maurice of Novigrad, respectively) it is highly likely that pro-Frankish factions were also present in the Dalmatian coastal towns. To describe the Dalmatian bishops as 'men of the Franks' would be an overstatement. But despite their recognition of Byzantine imperial administration until 805, their activities were in alignment with the pro-Frankish slant of the Holy See.

The Dalmatian bishops had several reasons for gravitating towards the Franks. Above all, as with their Istrian counterparts, the new rulers offered more opportunities for involvement in local administration.[52] The Dalmatian bishops had always been subject to the Holy See. Some of them also owed the founding of their bishoprics – and, as a consequence, their personal status – to the joint initiative of the pope and the Frankish ruler, whose mutual ambitions coalesced in the late eighth century and aligned with theirs.

In order to test our hypothesis that a relatively early, significant Carolingian cultural and political wave enveloped the eastern Adriatic coast in the late eighth

century, we should establish whether there are any similarities with sculpture from the other Dalmatian towns whose bishops feature in the acts of the Council of Nicaea. As in Split and Novigrad, these towns have notably homogeneous bodies of sculpture which can be dated to the last decades of the eighth century and which also represent their earliest medieval works of art.[53]

The phenomenon noted in the case of the Split workshop can be also observed in Kotor, Dubrovnik, Zadar, Rab and Osor – that is, all the episcopal sees represented at Nicaea – with one exception. The works from the earliest stone-carving workshops in all these ecclesiastical centres show indisputable chronological and stylistic affinities, and a common source in the cultural sphere of late Lombard and early Carolingian northern Italy. Yet in none of these towns was 'Liutprandian' a style which their own stone-carving workshops might have developed spontaneously. Thus the sudden appearance of late Liutprandian art in these towns, as in Split and Novigrad, can only be explained by external influences. The reliefs adorning the churches in these towns are so similar in both date and style as to rule out coincidence, besides the fact that they can all be linked to the bishops who represented these towns in Nicaea in 787.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a strong connection between ecclesiastical reorganization in the eastern Adriatic and the sudden cultural flourishing there at the end of the eighth century, as also between these events and the Frankish rule established somewhat later over the Dalmatian towns. This is not to claim that events of the 770s and 780s should be seen entirely through the lens of events between 805 and 812; they were not simply cause and effect. However, this chapter does argue for a more or less direct link between the two. While to conclude that this was all groundwork for later Frankish military and political advances may seem far-fetched, there is no doubt that the events around Hadrian's initiative to re-establish the archdiocese of Salona had clear political repercussions of which the pope was well aware. On a cultural and artistic level, these events also portended a shift in the political affiliation of the Dalmatian towns, ushering in a period of turbulence which would only come to a close with the Treaty of Aachen.

Notes

1 AD, 124.
2 *Gesta episcoporum Neapolitanorum*, ch. 36, 422; ch. 46, 427. This case is also highlighted in Borri 2005, 23. For more on this issue, see Beck 1959, 69–71; Oikonomidès 1960, 71–75; Norton 2007, 52–56, 62–67, 104–11; Their 2011.
3 For discussion of the Christopher affair, see Štih 2010, 222.
4 Bratož 1996; Bratož 2011, 229.
5 This view has been most consistently upheld by Neven Budak (1994, 83–85). For a more detailed analysis, see Basić 2013, 179–88.
6 *Liber pontificalis*, vol. 1, 330.
7 TS, chs 10–12, 48–57.
8 Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, no. 108, 69–71, 133–34.
9 Most notably in Mandić 1963; Mandić 1992; Katičić 1998, 252.

10 Mansi, vol. 13, cols 139–42, 366–68, 373–74, 387–88, 723–24, 732. The first to point them out was Stjepan Gunjača (1973, 453).

11 Matijević Sokol 2002, 75, 89–91, 95. See also Ivić 1992, 74; Floramo 2004.

12 TS, ch. 11, 55.

13 *DAI*, ch. 29, 124, lines 54–58; ch. 31, 146, 148, lines 8–25, 32–34; ch. 31, 150, lines 58–60. See also Ančić 1998, 16–17; *BSBC*, 104–17; Curta 2010a, 130–35. In fact, the only remaining argument for the traditional dating of John of Ravenna's office is a note found posthumously in Lucius' papers, which mentions that Severus' grandson lived during the reign of Emperor Theodosios III (715–717): Katičić 1993; Katičić 1998, 253–54. For a more detailed discussion see Basić 2013, 197–206.

14 Bulić and Bervaldi 1912, 155–58; Perojević 1922; Barada 1931; Klaić 1963–1965 [1971]; Elze 1982; Soldo 1982; Zimmermann 1982; Matijević Sokol 2002, 91–93; Katičić 2008, 445–46; Prozorov 2012. For an overview, see Basić 2014b.

15 Matijević Sokol 2002, 108, 110.

16 For a brief overview, see Matijašić 2001, 290–91; Cuscito 1988–1989, 61 n. 12. See also Cuscito 2002.

17 AD, 118. See also Bratož 1990, 47; Bratož 2001, 55–56.

18 *CodCar*, no. 63, 590; Ferluga 1992, 181–82; Margetić 1994a, 20; Štih 2010, 213–14; Borri 2010, 32–33.

19 Ančić 2001, 62.

20 JD², 104; Rando 1992, 645. See also Fedalto 1978; Cuscito 1990.

21 Namely Torcello, Jesolo, Caorle, Cittanova Eracliana and Malamocco, all of them relocated to the lagoons from the mainland: Ortalli 1980; Ortalli 2005.

22 Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, no. 73, 47.

23 *Epistolae Langobardicae collectae*, no. 21, 715. See also Noble 1984, 71–94, 180–81; Ferluga 1992, 181; Bratož 1994a, 60; Bolgia 2006, 20–21; Brown 2008, 445.

24 One should not rule out the possibility that members of the Carolingian politico-ecclesiastical elite planned to merge the metropolitan sees of Cividale and Grado, which had been divided in 607: Krahwinkler 2005, 65, 69–70; Štih 2010, 222–23.

25 Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, vol. 2, 520. For a more detailed discussion, see Basić 2013, 183–86. There are serious doubts as to whether Michael's term 'Dalmatia' actually implies the region of Dalmatia in the usual sense: Basić 2014a.

26 The process of withdrawal of the social elite (*clerus*, *nobiles*) from areas affected by military campaigning, led by the head of the church and involving the translation of saints' relics to a safer and better fortified location, can be observed throughout the Adriatic in this period, whether under threat from the Lombards (as in the case of Aquileia–Grado and Altino–Torcello) or the Slavs (including Epidaurus–Ragusa [Dubrovnik] in Dalmatia; Emona–Novigrad in Istria; but also Sparta–Monemvasia on the Peloponnese coast): Bratož 1994b.

27 Levak 2007, 49–52; see also *BJ*, 93. Neven Budak (2012, 173) points out that there was apparently no established church hierarchy in Split or Salona in 641, since nobody tried to prevent Martin from moving the relics.

28 Joško Belamarić (2014) connects these eastern fabrics with Archbishop John's journey to the Council of Nicaea, where he could easily have obtained them; yet Belamarić also notes a decree issued by the same council that altars could only be consecrated if they contain relics.

29 Matijević Sokol 2014; for a critical edition of the Gospel Book of Split, see *Evangeliarium Spalatense*.

30 Darrouzès 1975, 24–26; D62, D72, D77, E61, E71, E76 and F106–08 on 63–64; E327 on 68; Lamberz 2004, 8–11; 48 and n. 188; 50 and nn. 194, 197; 78 and n. 383.

31 Here, I am in broad agreement with Lujo Margetić and Predrag Komatina: Basić 2013, 284–86; Margetić 1983, 262 n. 36; see also the chapter by Komatina in this volume.

32 See n. 10 above. See also Margetić 1994b, 22; Basić 2013, 285; and the chapter by Komatina in this volume.

33 'Ut templa sine reliquiis sanctorum consecrata supplementum accipiant': Canon VII in Mansi, vol. 13, cols 747A, 751A–B. This is noted by both Neven Budak (2012, 160) and Željko Rapanić (2013), but without drawing out the full implications. See also Bolgia 2006, 26 n. 66.

34 For example, episcopal seats were left empty at Bordeaux from 675 to 814; at Périgueux from 675 until the tenth century; at Châlons from 675 to 779; at Geneva from 650 to 833; at Arles from 683 to 794; at Toulon from 679 to 879; and at Aix from 596 to 794. The episcopal catalogues at Nîmes, Béziers, Uzès, Carcassonne, Maguelonne, Elne and Agde are blank between the end of the seventh century and 788: Le Goff 1988, 35; see also Map 9.

35 Picard 1988, 521–35.

36 Selected surveys include Jelovina 1976; Belošević 1980; Milošević 2001; Sokol 2016; Piteša 2006; Petrinec 2009.

37 Rapanić 1982, 247–48; Rapanić 1987, 119; Basić and Jurković 2011; Basić 2013, 317–98; Basić 2014c. See also Basić 2008.

38 Basić and Jurković 2011, 168–70.

39 For different perspectives on this event, see Bulić and Bervaldi 1912; V. Novak 1923; G. Novak 1928; Dabinović 1930; Barada 1931; Barada 1940; Karaman 1940; Košćak 1982; Delonga 2001, 199–202, 209–13; Matijević Sokol 2002, 75–121. According to Rapanić, Donatus, bishop of Zadar and John 'the Nicaean', archbishop of Split, were Byzantine supporters who arrived from Ravenna on the eve of the Lombard conquest of the city of 751 or soon afterwards and reorganized the ecclesiastical hierarchy at Zadar and Split: Rapanić 2007, 180–86.

40 Piteša 2012, no. 9, 36–38; no. 10a, 39–43; no. 11, 43–46; no. 50, 98–100; no. 61, 117–20.

41 Basić 2008; Basić and Jurković 2011, 170–77; Basić 2014c.

42 A likely scenario of this kind was suggested by Antun Dabinović (1930, 206–11).

43 See Basić 2014c, with earlier literature.

44 Lončar 2006, 189, 191–92. See also Mihaljčić and Steindorff 1982, no. 135, 88; no. 143, 93; Jakšić 1999 [2000], 144 n. 31, 148; Curta 2010b, 268.

45 *Acta sancti Ursii*, 45, 46. This context has been noted by V. Novak 1923, 54. See also Šišić 1925, 308; Košćak 1982; *BJ*, 133.

46 A more detailed analysis is in Basić 2013, 241–43.

47 De Jong 2005, 112–14; De Jong 2006, 118–19; Patzold 2006. See also Majnarić 2010, 8–10.

48 Ančić 2009, 107.

49 Bertolini 1965; Classen 1965, 560–61; West 1999, 341.

50 West 1999, 351, 354–55.

51 Dabinović 1930, 210. For the dependence of religious geography and territorial control, see Wolfram 2001; Reimitz 2001.

52 Petranović and Margetić 1983–1984, 58, 60; Budak 1994, 15; Ančić 2001, 76–79; Margetić 2005, 83–84.

53 The relevant argument can be found in Basić 2013, 372–91, and will also be published in a more substantial forthcoming paper.

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19   Amalarius' stay in Zadar reconsidered*

Trpimir Vedriš

In a letter to Abbot Hilduin of St Denis, the Frankish liturgist Amalarius of Metz recalled his memories of a voyage to Constantinople.[1] Unfortunately, the surviving records of the journey Amalarius undertook between spring 813 and late winter 814 do not offer a detailed account of an early medieval Adriatic *grand tour*.[2] The text now known as the *Epistula ad Hilduinum Abbatem* (*c*. 824) is, in fact, a liturgical treatise, and it is only in the introductory paragraph that the author briefly, and rather allusively, refers to his short stay in Zadar.[3] However the *Epistula*, along with the poem written for another abbot, Peter of St Sylvester in Nonantola,[4] is a rare – if not unique – insider's testimony to Charlemagne's embassy to Constantinople.

We know from the meagre accounts of contemporary Frankish annalists that Amalarius (*c*. 780–*c*. 850) was the archbishop of Trier when he led Charlemagne's *mission diplomatique* to Emperor Michael I (811–813). The aim of this mission was to continue the negotiations successfully begun in the previous year.[5] The embassy itself was the high point of years of diplomatic exchanges between two empires at loggerheads and was dispatched to conclude and eventually ratify what is now called the Treaty of Aachen. Unaware that upon their arrival in Constantinople they would face a new *basileus* in the person of Leo V (813–820), the group of envoys probably left Aachen in April and in all likelihood reached Zadar by late June 813.

The putative text of the treaty that Amalarius must have been carrying in his luggage is not the subject of this inquiry; neither is his direct involvement in the politics of the day. Not only has the text of the treaty not been preserved, but Amalarius himself left barely a trace of what would now be termed 'political activity'. Wherever he travelled, liturgy remained his only true love; this much, at least, can be gleaned from his writings. Amalarius used all his journeys – more frequent than was customary in his time – to explore the liturgical customs of the places he visited.[6] Thus, besides discussing ordination times in Zadar, he is seen interrogating Archdeacon Theodore and other 'ministri ecclesiae sancti Petri' in Rome, admiring the beauty of the Divine Liturgy in the churches of Constantinople and discussing liturgical matters with the monks of Nonantola on the windswept deck of their ship as it was tossed by stormy seas.[7] Some of his voyages were recorded, yet none in as much detail as the one to Constantinople. This diplomatic mission

was not only recorded by the busy scribes of key 'intelligence centres' of the day: Amalarius himself left varied, albeit scattered, traces of his own journey. The main source examined here is the *Epistula ad Hilduinum abbatem* and, to a lesser extent, his *Versus marini*.[8] Amalarius' other works such as the *Liber de ordine antiphonarii* and the *Liber officialis* provide additional information.[9]

The *Epistula*, far from being unknown to scholars, has been scrutinized as an important text about liturgical customs – usually by historians of the liturgy. It has also occasionally been used as a source for early-ninth-century travelling, indeed often in the context of diplomatic relations between the Franks and Byzantium. However, many questions persist about the event discussed here, Amalarius' visit to Zadar and its relevance for the history of the region. While of considerable interest to the Croatian scholarly community, this tenuous reference to an insignificant town on the eastern Adriatic awakening from its century-long slumber has failed to attract broader scholarly attention. The city of Zadar in northern Dalmatia disappears from our sources in the seventh century, when its ancient glory faded, and only re-appears in the written evidence around the year 805. Its political position in the period – like early medieval Dalmatia in general – has not received extensive treatment in international scholarship.[10] To this day, this somewhat forgotten region lies outside the purview of both Carolingian experts and Byzantinists.[11] However, the area situated 'somewhere between Aachen and Constantinople', once caught between two competing empires, entered international politics at the end of the eighth century. From the present perspective, as peripheries and borderlands find their place in historical investigation, the salient issue is primarily the city's position within multiple peripheries.[12] In this context, Amalarius' few sentences offer a sort of keyhole into the world of the Adriatic in the early ninth century, an important period in which, as Jonathan Shepard has put it, 'Bunkers' like Zadar were turning into 'Open Cities'.[13]

With all this in mind, the aim of this chapter is threefold. It is, in the first place, an attempt at a close reading of the fragment of Amalarius' treatise as evidence for a particular historical event. Secondly, it aims to offer a 'thick description' – as far as one can in the early ninth century – to contextualize Amalarius' short visit to Zadar. Finally, it will address the broader issue of the ecclesiastical position of Zadar between Rome and Constantinople at the time of the treaty.

The text and its meaning

At the core of this chapter is the interpretation of a fragment, so let the text speak for itself first. According to the single surviving manuscript, Amalarius wrote:

> Quando fui apocrisiarius, quamvis indignus, videlicet minimus a maxima potestate, in partibus Grecorum, audivi inter nostros, id est meos socios et eos qui ad imperium Grecorum pertinent, diversa sentire de temporibus fixis apud nos sacrorum ordinum. Ut repperi apud quendam archiepiscopum, ipso narrante, de civitatis [*sic*] Iadhare, sine aliqua observatione nostrae consuetudinis celebrant consecrationem sacrorum. Retulit quomodo vellet aliquem

diaconum promovere ad presbiteratus officium in vigilia paschae; ipso rennuente [*sic*] eodem tempore, promotus est in festivitate sancti Petri. In loco ubi eram vigilia memorata festivitatis sancti Petri, erat quidem, ut retulit, diaconus nobiscum, qui veniebat a partibus Romae, confirmans se factum diaconum ab apostolico Leone. Rogitavit me ut in illo die proveherem illum. Ego ammodum * restiti et legato, qui me ducebat, et ipsi diacono, et vix evasi.[14]

The fragment can be translated as:

When I was in Greek parts as an envoy, however undeserving, moreover the lowliest on the behalf of highest authority, I heard from ours, that is from my colleagues and those who belong to the rule of the Greeks, that they understand the established time of holy ordination differently from us. I found out from a certain archbishop, in his own words, of the city of Zadar, that they celebrate the holy ordinations without any regard for our customs. He told me how he wished to ordain a certain deacon to the rank of presbyter during the celebration of the Paschal Vigil; but since he rejected this, he was ordained on the Feast of St Peter. In the place where I stayed during the Vigil of that same Feast of St Peter, there was indeed a deacon with us who said that he came from Rome, affirming that he had been ordained by Pope Leo. He asked me to ordain that one on that very day. I completely rejected both the envoy who was my guide and that deacon and narrowly avoided this [i.e. having to perform the ordination].

The point of departure for our present analysis is the assumption that, in this fragment, Amalarius is describing events which took place in Zadar.[15] The text refers to two 'liturgical events'. The first is the unsuccessful ordination attempt, which Amalarius learned about while discussing the 'established time of holy ordination' with his collocutors. His statement that this all happened while he was travelling as an envoy in 'Greek parts' geographically locates the discussion between his fellow travellers ('socii mei' of the text) and those who 'belong to the rule of the Greeks' ('qui ad imperium Grecorum pertinent'). The second event is one in which Amalarius participated and which can be placed in Zadar with more certainty.

The first ordination

The relationship between the two events may best be understood by starting with the identity of the archbishop ('quidam archiepiscopus') and the reason why he is mentioned. During the discussion between them, the archbishop tells Amalarius about his attempt to ordain a certain deacon to the rank of presbyter during the Paschal Vigil ('promovere ad presbiteratus officium in vigilia paschae'). Since the deacon rejected the proposed time ('ipso rennuente eodem tempore'), he was ordained during the Vigil of Sts Peter and Paul ('promotus est in festivitate sancti Petri'). In order to grasp the relevance of this passage for the present discussion,

I suggest breaking down the fragment into the following three questions: why did the deacon refuse ordination during the Paschal Vigil; what is the significance of the dates mentioned here; and who was Amalarius' collocutor?

'Ipso rennuente'

The reasons why the unnamed deacon refused ordination by Amalarius' collocutor can only be inferred, since there is simply not enough information available to establish whether this rejection was linked to his understanding of particular practices and customs. But it is worth noting that the unnamed Dalmatian archbishop is talking about his own deacon, who would have been a member of the local clergy. According to contemporary, or at least near-contemporary, evidence, a deacon was only supposed to be ordained by his superior, that is, by the bishop to whom he 'promised his ministry'. The critical phrase when defining a deaconate ('quia non ad sacerdotium, sed ad ministerium consecratur') had a long history before 813 and will be revisited in the discussion of Amalarius' refusal to ordain the second deacon mentioned.[16]

'In festivitate sancti Petri'

Why does Amalarius refer to the Paschal Vigil and that of St Peter? Besides the fact that these were among the most common days for sacerdotal ordination in Zadar, a custom largely preserved in the Roman Catholic church up to modern times, the reference to the Feast of St Peter might be of particular significance. In the first place, the cathedral of Zadar had been dedicated to St Peter before being re-dedicated to St Anastasia of Sirmium (in Pannonia) soon after her relics were translated to Zadar at the very beginning of the ninth century. This supposedly early dedication of the cathedral to St Peter is noted in a local legend – the *Translatio S. Anastasiae*[17] – and is also confirmed by an eleventh-century inscription.[18] An explanation for the reference to St Peter may also be found in Amalarius' description of the subsequent event which involved him personally. In other words, his reference to the feast of St Peter as the date for the sacerdotal ordination should be understood primarily in the light of what had happened during his stay in Zadar.

'Quendam archiepiscopum [. . .] de civitatis [sic] Iadhare'

At first sight, the third question seems to be the easiest one to answer: the person who spoke to Amalarius was clearly an archbishop of Zadar. But on closer inspection, Amalarius' phrase ('quendam archiepiscopum, ipso narrante, de civitatis [sic] Iadhare') may have multiple interpretations. It could be translated as either 'a certain archbishop speaking about the "Iadertine case"' or 'according to his own words, the archbishop of Zadar'. In terms of language both interpretations seem plausible, yet neither is without its problems. If we accept the first translation, it sounds odd for the archbishop to be described in this way if the event

indeed took place in Zadar. It also seems an unusual way to identify the arch-bishop whose guest Amalarius presumably was, even though his precise identity was of no major interest for the discussion, nor would Amalarius' reader have been expected to know him. Yet the fact that the text is somewhat ambivalent about the relationship between the archbishop and Zadar also poses more difficul-ties for the second interpretation. Might it mean that *archiepiscopus* was simply referring to the *civitas* in question? In my view, Amalarius' subsequent exposition is inconsistent with such a reading, and I am ready to interpret the confusing inser-tion of *de* in front of *civitatis* as a lapsus, primarily because the text is otherwise composed in solid Latin.[19]

All these dilemmas notwithstanding, the most peculiar detail in this passage, assuming that he was indeed referring to the senior churchman of Zadar, is the very fact that Amalarius calls him 'archbishop'. Zadar was only elevated to the rank of an archbishopric and metropolitan see in the mid-twelfth century.[20] While we know of some earlier efforts by the bishops of Zadar to gain a more prestigious position in Dalmatia,[21] official recognition of the title of metropolitan archbishop was only given in 1154.[22] There is no evidence that this title was ever bestowed on the bishops of Zadar in the ninth century. Despite this, Bishop Donatus (fl. *c.* 805) has been considered as one possible candidate – *inter alios* – for Ama-larius' *archiepiscopus* because he was remembered in medieval Zadar as an arch-bishop.[23] However, the title attributed to him by the local cult and hagiography is mid-twelfth century at the very earliest.[24]

Amalarius' reference to this senior churchman of Zadar has yet to receive sub-stantive treatment and remains a puzzle. The easiest solution is to assume that the title is a mistake, a simple scribal error. This, however, does not seem likely. The unique manuscript is relatively early and, technically speaking, it seems improba-ble that the scribe would add a prefix to an existing title. Alternative explanations, including a recent discovery, would suggest that the title had something to do with the position of Zadar after the Treaty of Aachen. But before addressing this central point of our inquiry, further analysis of the text is in order.

The second ordination

'In loco ubi eram'

After his report of the first unsuccessful ordination, Amalarius notes another event connected to the Vigil of St Peter. It seems clear that he witnessed this second event in person, and this also fits our reconstruction of Amalarius' itinerary. The embassy left Aachen soon after Easter 813[25] and reached Constantinople towards the end of the year, since they spent the Christmas season there; it is therefore plausible that they could have arrived in Zadar by the end of June.[26] In terms of language, the most problematic detail is the sentence 'in loco ubi eram vigilia memorata festivitatis sancti Petri', since the verb *est* would be expected here. Again, there are at least two possible interpretations. On the one hand, the feast day could be connected to the previous sentence ('Ipso rennuente eodem tempore,

promotus est in festivitate sancti Petri, in loco ubi eram vigilia memorata fes-tivitatis sancti Petri'), making the translation: 'having declined that time, he was promoted on the Feast of St Peter, in the place where I was at the time of the aforementioned Vigil of the Feast of St Peter'. On the other hand, 'vigilia memo-rata' could be an ablative of time, connecting it to the subsequent sentence which contains the full verb form ('In loco ubi eram vigilia memorata festivitatis sancti Petri erat quidem, ut retulit, diaconus nobiscum, qui veniebat a partibus Romae, confirmans se factum diaconum ab apostolico Leone'). The translation would then be 'in the place where I stayed during the Vigil of that same Feast of St Peter, there was indeed a deacon with us who said that he came from Rome, affirming that he had been ordained by Pope Leo'. I am inclined to assume that the latter interpretation is the logical one; but this raises a new set of questions.

How should we interpret this second event on the Vigil of St Peter, when a Carolingian prelate and imperial emissary to the Byzantine court was apparently invited to conduct an ordination ceremony in the capital of a Byzantine province? We will need to address – at least hypothetically – the identities of and relation-ship between those termed 'deacon' (*diaconus*), 'that one' (*illum*) and 'envoy' (*legatus*). And how should we understand Amalarius' decision to refuse their request? Unlike the first event which, I would suggest, serves as an 'archetype', this time it is Amalarius himself who declines to ordain the deacon into the priest-hood 'on that very day'. The first case served to inform Amalarius' reader that local customs in Dalmatia differed from those at the Frankish court.[27] Amalarius' subsequent sentences confirm that varying customs for ordination times are at stake: he thought he was following Roman custom, according to what he had read in Francia, while acknowledging that liturgical customs were, of course, very different elsewhere.[28] What connects the two events is the preferred day and, pos-sibly, the persons trying to persuade Amalarius to ordain a priest in Zadar on the eve of 28 June 813.

'Legatus qui me ducebat'

There are at least three possible answers to the question 'who was our *legatus*?' He might have been somebody from the embassy itself, somebody from Zadar or somebody from Rome. If the *legatus* were a member of the embassy, the only per-son who appears in the sources as an active leader – besides Amalarius himself – is Abbot Peter. The embassy consisted of two groups: those who accompanied Amalarius and a group of monks from Nonantola. Could the leader of this second group be our *legatus*? There is no direct evidence that Peter was the 'guide' of Amalarius. Moreover, Amalarius generally refers to him elsewhere as *Petrus* or *Petrus abbas* and otherwise treats him in more informal and friendly tones than Hilduin or other dignitaries with whom he corresponded. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that our mysterious *legatus* might have been Abbot Peter.[29]

Could he have been somebody from the local area? As previously noted, Bishop Donatus of Zadar has been posthumously elevated to 'archbishop' in the hagiography, and he also travelled far and wide, playing a role in the international

diplomacy of the day. The *Annales regni Francorum* records him acting as a representative of the Dalmatians at the court of Charlemagne in 805,[30] and local hagiography documents his diplomatic mission to Constantinople in the following years.[31] Could our *legatus* be none other than the 'archbishop', as Amalarius has it, of Zadar?[32] Unfortunately, there is once again no external evidence for this, and the text itself provides no secure guidance either, so this interpretation relies on assumptions about Donatus' activities and, in more general terms, the intermediary role that the Dalmatian clergy played between the Franks and the Byzantines.

'Diaconus [. . .] qui veniebat a partibus Romae'

The affair may have included a third, hitherto unmentioned, party. The reference to the deacon who 'came from Rome' raises the possibility that the papacy might have played a role in the negotiations. Leaving broader considerations of this complex issue aside, it seems worth continuing with our analysis of the excerpt.[33] The first question, when considering relations between the parties involved, is to whom does 'rogitavit me' refer? Although it might be the *legatus* mentioned in the sentence that follows, bearing in mind that Amalarius has already referred to the Vigil of St Peter, I am inclined to interpret it as Amalarius being asked by somebody who has already been mentioned in the text. Thus the likeliest interpretation of the passage is that Amalarius was asked (*rogitavit*) to ordain a priest either by his host – the archbishop – or by the 'Roman deacon' mentioned in the previous sentence. While the identity of the deacon cannot be traced, the suggestion that he might have been acting together with the local bishop invites more serious consideration of a possible Roman presence.

As the passage testifies, the exchange involved a deacon who 'said that he came from Rome', where he had been ordained by Pope Leo III (795–816).[34] Is it possible that Amalarius' collocutor was one of the twelve deacons whose ordination under Leo was recorded by the *Liber pontificalis*?[35] Amalarius' repetition of the phrase *ut retulit* at this point probably refers to the deacon's arrival or to his origin. The phrase *veniebat*, however, leaves us wondering whether he means that the deacon came to Zadar in connection with the embassy, possibly to join the group as a representative of the 'third party', or whether he was a 'Roman deacon' otherwise engaged in Zadar. One final hypothesis is that he was a member of the local clergy who either came from Rome, or had been ordained there, or both. Whichever interpretation we prefer, all have relevance for our understanding of relations between the local church and Rome, since all three suggest active relations between the two and can be used as an argument in favour of palpable Roman influence in early-ninth-century Dalmatia. As Mladen Ančić astutely notes, the fact that on their return from Aachen in 812, Emperor Michael's ambassadors stopped in Rome, where they received a copy of the treaty from Pope Leo himself, supports this argument.[36] In light of Leo's clear engagement in the ongoing negotiations, the presence of a deacon in Zadar who stresses that he had himself been 'ordained by Pope Leo' certainly calls for attention.

In summary, our tableau would appear to involve the archbishop of Zadar, in the company of a Lombard abbot (whichever of the two is Amalarius' *legatus*) and

a member of the Roman clergy, trying to persuade a Frankish bishop and imperial *missus* to raise a local deacon to the priesthood. Importantly, the event took place in the principal town of a region that Charlemagne had recently recognized as coming within the Byzantine sphere of influence. These new details add obvious political overtones to our event, which brings us to the third and final issue: how should we interpret Amalarius' vehement rejection of the request?

Amalarius' rejection

When attempting to categorize the possible reasons for Amalarius' rejection – for example, 'canonical', 'liturgical' or 'political' – it is important to remember that '[t]he liturgy, the public worship of the Church, was one of the most formative characteristics of medieval religion, if not medieval life as a whole'.[37] This observation also alludes to the important relationship between liturgy and politics.[38] Yet while a clear-cut distinction is problematic, considering the different possible reasons may help us clarify surrounding our event's context.

'In partibus Grecorum'

Assessing the event in her *Carolingian Portraits*, Eleanor Shipley Duckett suggests that Amalarius is, in fact, referring to differences between the Frankish and Greek liturgies.[39] Thus by refusing to ordain a priest in Zadar, he is refusing to participate in the 'Greek liturgy' and, by extension, this would imply that the inhabitants of Zadar were, in the liturgical sense, 'Greeks'. Issues of jurisdiction notwithstanding – and these should by no means be confused with liturgical tradition – the argument that at this time Dalmatian clergy followed the eastern liturgical rite merits consideration. To start with, Amalarius refers to 'Greek parts', and early medieval western authors often use the adjective 'Greek' to describe the liturgical rite.[40] Yet while there is evidence for the use of the Greek liturgy in southern Dalmatia, there is no written record of its use in early medieval Zadar.[41] The assumption that it might have been practised in Zadar relies mostly on the interpretation of art and architectural evidence and, in my view, remains tenuous.[42]

One of the most frequently used pieces of evidence for the apparent use of the Greek liturgy in early medieval Zadar is a document issued on 6 February 1198 in the Lateran Palace by Innocent III, decreeing that a certain bishop who had been elected by the laity should be removed from his position. In Croatian historiography this has been interpreted as referring to the church of Zadar,[43] and the notion of the Greek Byzantine liturgical tradition in Zadar continues to crop up in more recent Croatian historiography.[44] However, while the document does indeed mention a 'capitulum sancte Anastasie', it apparently refers to the Chapel of St Anastasia in Santa Severina, Calabria.[45] Without this reference, the only explicit written evidence for the presence of the Greek language in ninth-century Zadar is a single inscription.[46]

Thus, the interpretation that Amalarius did not want to participate in the Greek liturgy is misleading: he does not say this himself, nor does the local context support such an interpretation. Another possible explanation along the lines of a

Latin–Greek divide is that Zadar – and Dalmatia in general – had come under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople from the early eighth century onwards. Although widely accepted in regional historiography,[47] this assumption has now been questioned and successfully refuted.[48] But if not a Latin–Greek divide, did different customs *within* the Latin oecumene prompt Amalarius' refusal to perform the ordination?

'Manum super caput eius tenente'

The proposed sacerdotal ordination could certainly appear problematic from a traditional perspective. Yet leaving this complex issue aside, I will briefly consider Amalarius' somewhat controversial view in a very similar matter: the debate about the laying on of hands to ordain candidates to the deaconate.[49] Discussing the origins of the deaconate in his *Liber officialis*, Amalarius refers to a 'certain booklet' on the holy orders, by an unknown author, questioning whether 'diaconus [. . .] non ad sacerdotium, sed ad ministerium consecratur': only the bishop should lay hands on the candidate.[50] The booklet in question is the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, a fifth-century text composed in southern Gaul and often cited in important early medieval collections such as the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, the *Ordines Romani* and the *Pontificale Romanum*. It is important to stress that in his critique Amalarius is not questioning the nature of the deaconate, but rather the authority of the text ('Numquid scriptor libelli doctior atque sanctior apostolis') concerning the laying on of hands. He seems to be in agreement with the practice set forth in a text as authoritative as Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* (*c*. 215), which states that a deacon is ordained 'for the service of the bishop'.[51]

John Gibaut suggests that although 'Amalarius questions the practice which directs the bishop alone to impose hands on the deacon' his position is not that of ' "excessive love of antiquarianism" or an "exaggerated craze for symbolism" '.[52] It indicates rather the different liturgical customs of the Frankish church, which are attested by a number of influential manuscripts.[53] In theory, therefore, it should not have been a problem for Amalarius to participate in the ordination of our deacon, let alone a priest. The reason for his rejection is more likely to have been the proposed date of the ordination, which lay outside the Ember days, so dear to Amalarius.[54] Or, in the words of Eleanor Shipley Duckett, 'only by firm and repeated refusal did the orthodox Frankish Amalar[ius] escape the invitation, hideous to him in its irregularity, of raising a deacon to the priesthood on a day outside the Frankish Ember seasons, on St Peter's Vigil, June 28'.[55]

To sum up, Amalarius' rejection should not be read as – to use modern parlance – an 'unecumenical' refusal to mingle with the Greeks; nor should it be read as deriving from his views on ordination, published elsewhere. Thus Amalarius' testimony cannot be taken as proof that the Byzantine liturgy was in use in Zadar around the year 800: rather the opposite. I would suggest that his words should be interpreted as referring to the diverse customs inside the Latin oecumene,[56] the world of Charlemagne's Latin Christendom, which Amalarius himself delimits as lying 'between the shores of the Danube and the Tyrrhenian Sea, and the edges of Germania, from the Gallic Sea [. . .] to the islands of the Britons and the Scots'.[57]

Thus, while reference to the Ember days may offer an explanation for Amalarius' reluctance, his decision might also suggest a more political dimension, unwillingness to meddle in the affairs of a local church 'torn' between its political subjection to 'the rule of the Greeks' and its traditional subjection to the bishop of Rome.

The church of Zadar and its bishop at the time of Amalarius' stay

The years before and after Charlemagne's coronation in Rome were extremely important for the history of Zadar and in a sense, this 'era of Bishop Donatus' can indeed be considered a new beginning for the future Dalmatian capital. Zadar emerges from obscurity – at least in our written sources – when its bishop, Donatus, appears representing the Dalmatians at Charlemagne's court at Diedenhofen just after Christmas 805.[58] At roughly the same time, the relics of the Sirmian martyr, St Anastasia, were translated from Constantinople to Zadar, and the rotunda of the Holy Trinity was (re)built.[59] In other words, the image of Zadar's 'new beginning' largely depends on evidence of its bishop's activities.

In nomine Sanctae Trinitatis

Different forms of local memory have preserved the image of Donatus as travelling far and wide, shuttling between Diedenhofen and Constantinople and interceding between emperors. He was praised for bringing Anastasia's precious relics to Zadar and eventually credited with building her a monumental *martyrium*. The rotunda, later to be re-dedicated to St Donatus, stands as telling testimony and monument – although, for the early Middle Ages, it is not clear what exactly it is a monument to.[60] Our late medieval sources show the people of Zadar believed the rotunda to have been built by Bishop Donatus, and our architectural evidence seems to support the idea. If we accept the hypothesis that there were two phases in the rotunda's construction, modern scholarship places the second phase between the 750s and 866.[61] The latest analysis of the church's wooden beams dates them to *c*. 800, thus coming close to confirming local tradition that Donatus was responsible for building the church.[62] Among other things, this dating of the rotunda's construction to the first decade of the ninth century has led some to consider the possibility that the church was originally meant to serve as a *martyrium* of St Anastasia.[63] This interpretation, supported by additional details concerning the cult of St Anastasia in Constantinople, suggests that the problems around the building of the church of the Holy Trinity and the 'implantation' of the cult of St Anastasia in Zadar should be analysed in the context of the restoration of Byzantine authority in Dalmatia after the Treaty of Aachen.

Donatus peccator

Besides a brief reference in the *Annales* and the oft-quoted *Translatio S. Anastasiae*, there is a rich epigraphic corpus confirming that the future patron saint of Zadar, Donatus, was a historical person. The first piece of evidence is the

'sarcophagus of St Anastasia'. Based on its epigraphy, the sarcophagus has generally been dated to the early ninth century. It housed the body of St Anastasia, a fourth-century Pannonian martyr from Sirmium, whose relics were in all likelihood translated to Zadar from Constantinople in the first decade of the ninth century. As noted, local hagiographic tradition credits Donatus with acquiring the relics, and two out of the three sections of the inscription on the sarcophagus mention him as the 'sinful bishop Donatus'.[64] There can be little doubt that these inscriptions were commissioned by Donatus himself. Referring to both dedicatees of the two churches in the episcopal complex – the cathedral of St Anastasia and the rotunda of the Holy Trinity – and probably executed in Zadar, the sarcophagus is valuable evidence of a local bishop's good works in the early-ninth-century eastern Adriatic. Moreover, the inscriptions may indicate that the relics were originally meant to be placed in the recently built rotunda. In other words, the inscriptions on our sarcophagus connect Donatus with the cult of the Sirmian martyr, the cathedral, and the rotunda of the Holy Trinity.

In addition to the inscriptions on the sarcophagus, there are three fragments of architraves from the cathedral (possibly parts of a ciborium) which bear Donatus' name and title.[65] Further possible evidence of our bishop's activities can be found in the church of St Peter of the Windlass (*de argata*) and possibly in others in Zadar. The dedicatory inscription from St Peter's confirms local veneration of the early Christian couple, Hadrian and Natalia of Nicomedia, victims of Diocletian's persecution.[66] More importantly, both the inscriptions and stylistic analysis of the fragments suggest that the church was decorated in the early ninth century and that the donor (*Donat*[us]) can be identified as our Bishop Donatus.[67] Finally, another two inscriptions preserved on fragments of two stone slabs found in Zadar's medieval *Campo Colonna* might possibly be connected to him.[68] If the dating of these fragments is correct and identification with our bishop accepted, Donatus can be credited not only with the extensive reconstruction of the episcopal complex and (re)building of the rotunda of the Holy Trinity but also with building (or decorating) other churches such as St Peter's.

The epigraphic corpus briefly reviewed earlier forms a relatively weighty dossier for the bishop of such a peripheral ninth-century diocese, and the abundance of both local and external evidence for his historicity means that we can safely assume that Donatus was a person of some importance who played a significant role in turning Zadar into an 'Open City'. Mladen Ančić has taken this argument further, identifying Donatus as Amalarius' *archiepiscopus* and suggesting that 'the mental image of the city remembered by the learned bishop, probably together with what he remembered he heard in Constantinople, was such that it conformed to the image of a city that is a seat of an archbishop'.[69] Yet none of our contemporary inscriptions actually refers to Donatus as archbishop, and this identification is based on an *argumentum ex silentio*, since we do not know when his office ended. Donatus is mentioned for the first time in 805, and later tradition has him playing an active role as mediator between empires, possibly in 810 or 811. But we have no *terminus post quem non* for his activities. Some scholars have therefore suggested that Amalarius met one of Donatus' successors, if not his immediate

replacement. For example, Jean Michel Hanssens thought that Amalarius indeed spoke to the senior churchman of Zadar but that the archbishop who greeted Amalarius there could not have been Donatus, 'famous for his voyage to Aachen in 805 and negotiating peace between the two emperors in 810',[70] because he had died two years earlier.[71] Relying on this unfounded assumption about the time of Donatus' death, Hanssens opted for an unknown bishop of Zadar.[72] However intriguing this idea might be, until recently we had no evidence to support it. Medieval and early modern compilers of local lists of bishops were at pains to reconstruct an unbroken chain of episcopal succession in Zadar from the beginning of the seventh to the eleventh centuries. For the ninth, they mention only two: Donatus (fl. *c*. 805) and Vitalis (fl. *c*. 879). But a recent discovery in Zadar Cathedral promises to shed additional light on both the title and the identity of Amalarius' collocutor.

Ursus Archiepiscopus

The fragmentary inscription was discovered on the side wall of the cathedral in the late 1980s. It was, however, only after the publication of Pavuša Vežić's monograph on the episcopal complex in Zadar that the discovery attracted scholarly attention.[73] Vežić initially read the inscription as IRSVS ARIHIEPISC[opus] FEC[it], laconically commenting that the 'palaeographical features suggest dating it to the early Middle Ages'.[74] The circumstances in which the inscription ended up in the wall of the cathedral are not clear but are probably connected to a thirteenth-century renovation.[75] My interpretation of both the inscription and its discovery largely follows that of Ivan Basić.[76] According to Basić, it is possible to date the inscription to the early ninth century and to interpret it as VRSVS ARCHIEPISC[opus] FEC[it].[77] While this has yet to be confirmed, it is likely to arouse considerable interest as the earliest appearance in Zadar of the title *archiepiscopus*. Basić also notes that – apart from another, rather dubious, ninth-century epigraphic reference to an archbishop from Krk – this is the only early medieval Dalmatian inscription referring to an archbishop who is not connected to the church of Salona-Split.[78] He also stresses that Archbishop Ursus does not appear in the episcopal lists of Zadar, making this inscription the first, and so far the only, evidence of his existence.[79]

   If the inscription does indeed belong to a local bishop and if it can be dated to the ninth century, the discovery demands interpretation. Its context would seem clear: the restoration of Byzantine political and administrative power in the Adriatic.[80] This 'return of the empire' followed a series of successful interventions by the imperial fleet which helped pave the way for the Treaty of Aachen.[81] While acknowledging that a Byzantine *renovatio* was not yet in view, we should allow for a 'real Byzantine presence' at this time. For example, the revised dating of the so-called *Taktikon Uspenskij*, among other things, enabled the late Tibor Živković to suggest re-dating the elevation of Dalmatia to the status of a region commanded by an *archōn* under Nikephoros I (802–811) and then to become a theme under Leo V (813–820),[82] and this provides us with a framework for assessing the inscription of Archbishop Ursus.

My hypothesis is that, besides the silent testimony of the rotunda of the Holy Trinity and other scattered sources, such as Amalarius' reference to an *archiepiscopus*, the Ursus inscription offers further testimony to a particular (albeit irregular and short-lived) moment in the history of Zadar. At a time when two superpowers sought to re-affirm their presence in the Adriatic with carrot-and-stick politics, local elites were probably in a good position to negotiate their status. The first decades of the ninth century saw not only a series of military interventions in the Adriatic but also various diplomatic demarches: exercises of 'Soft Power', such as sending a whole stream of relics to the Adriatic towns.[83] Thus while both tradition and jurisdictional rights connected Dalmatia to Rome, an attempt to draw the Dalmatian bishops into the Constantinopolitan orbit is not completely implausible.[84]

The church of Zadar between the Franks, Rome and Byzantium

At this point, it is tempting to apply a truly medieval exegesis to the exchange between Amalarius, Abbot Peter and the *archiepiscopus*, finding a sort of archetype for the episode in a fascinating letter sent by Alcuin to Charlemagne in June 799. While not a perfect mirror image, the encounter in Zadar shows how Alcuin's tripartite division described in his letter is reflected in the lower spheres of political and administrative reality. Thus, those gathered in Zadar are a faint echo of Alcuin's 'tres personae in mundo altissime', with Amalarius and Abbot Peter representing 'regalis dignitas' and 'rector populi christiani'; the unnamed archbishop of Zadar is a subject of 'imperialis dignitas et secundae Romae saecularis potentia'; while the anonymous deacon appears as an envoy of 'apostolica sublimitas, quae beati Petri principis apostolorum sedem vicario munere regere solet'.[85]

Returning to the assumption that the beginning of the cult of St Anastasia and the construction of the rotunda of the Holy Trinity should be assessed in the context of the restoration of Byzantine authority in Dalmatia after the Treaty of Aachen, these activities ascribed to Bishop Donatus may be connected with the events recorded by Amalarius. In his attempt to place the early years of the church in a broader historical context, Mladen Ančić has argued that 'the rebuilding of the older rotund church was directly related to the Byzantine plans for imperial reconquest in the Adriatic in the early ninth century'[86] and that this rebuilding 'was intended for this high-ranked representative of the emperor [i.e. the *archōn* of Dalmatia], as a reflection of imperial authority and ideology in the frontier-zone'.[87] But as we have seen, the political re-activation of the eastern empire in Dalmatia cannot be taken as evidence for the Greek liturgical tradition in the region, as was implied elsewhere;[88] nor is it evidence for the jurisdictional supremacy of the Constantinopolitan patriarch in Zadar and Dalmatia on the eve of the Treaty of Aachen.[89]

The evidence connected to Bishop Donatus and his successors, however, fits the new perspective on ecclesiastical affairs in the Adriatic offered by contributors

to this volume.[90] The appearance of the Dalmatian bishops in our sources from the late eighth and early ninth centuries reflects a large-scale ecclesiastical *renovatio* which took place along the eastern Adriatic coast. While Dalmatia, or more precisely its coastal cities, cannot be considered missionary territory, the last decade of the eighth century saw a far more active papacy in the region; and although the scale of this activity cannot compare with that of the powerful late-ninth-century popes – such as Nicholas I (858–867) or John VIII (872–882) – Hadrian I's pontificate (772–795) can nevertheless be seen as a period of proactive diplomatic activity by the Holy See. Hadrian openly revived Roman claims to its ancient rights in the diocese of Illyricum, and the fact that Dalmatia is never mentioned in these claims clearly indicates that its firm position in the Roman embrace was not questioned in Constantinople at the time.[91] If Dalmatia was seen as a frontier, even a disputed region, in terms of political influence or imperial administration, in the ecclesiastical sense it definitely was not. This is further supported by readings of the presence of Dalmatian bishops at the church councils called by the Constantinopolitan patriarchs in the second half of the eighth century. The argument that they were not subjects of the Constantinopolitan patriarch is not new but has now been elaborated in detail.[92] The latest evidence from Zadar, namely the inscription of Archbishop Ursus and Amalarius' reference to the archbishop of Zadar, throws light on the possible negotiations undertaken by members of local ecclesiastical elites after the establishment of the new order in 812. While the exact position and rank of our senior Zadar churchman cannot be confirmed, his ecclesiastical background was undoubtedly in Rome, not Constantinople.

Yet just as we should not take Amalarius' brief reference to 'nostrae consuetudines' as differing from those he encountered in Dalmatia to imply use of the Greek liturgy in Zadar, the presence of Latin liturgical traditions in Dalmatia should not be connected with the Franks' intrusion, as some have suggested.[93] Amalarius' nuanced reference to those who 'belong to the rule of the Greeks' clearly reflects the complex political reality of the early-ninth-century Adriatic. Amalarius makes a fine distinction between the Greeks (in an ethnic or liturgical sense) and the subjects of the Byzantine emperor.[94] In other words, he was talking to members of the local ecclesiastical elite who belonged to the Latin oecumene in terms of language, ritual and jurisdiction and yet were subjects living under 'Greek rule', i.e. the *basileus*.

In light of these observations, the Treaty of Aachen can be seen as an important (albeit not yet decisive) moment in the history of Zadar and Dalmatia in general. Understanding the position of the local churches in Dalmatia at this time is further illuminated by some of the chapters in this volume,[95] which stress three key points: a visible renewal of papal activity on the eastern Adriatic coast, the complex dynamics of the Byzantine political-ecclesiastical presence there and local evidence which links the re-emergence (or re-establishment) of ecclesiastical structures on the eastern Adriatic coast with the Frankish presence in Italy and the Adriatic.[96] Assuming that the recent (re)interpretation of Zadar's political position after the Treaty of Aachen is correct, and the province did indeed become a theme with Zadar as its capital, the position of its bishop may be re-examined in a new

light. A comparison with the contemporary Byzantine practice of elevating sees as a means of tightening control – as was the case with the establishment of the metropolitan sees of Athens and Patras – would certainly be one direction for future research:[97] that a 'return of the empire' involved the creation or elevation of bishoprics by the Isaurian emperors by way of tightening imperial authority clearly shows that revitalization of the church and restoration of imperial dominion went hand in hand.[98] If our recent finds are testimony to at least one early-ninth-century bishop who claimed the title of archbishop, this may also indicate an attempt to elevate the position of Zadar after the Treaty of Aachen. Yet how is this attempt to be understood? Was it the result of the same process observed elsewhere in 'Greek parts' or the outcome of successful lobbying by local elites? Or if we accept the interpretation of Amalarius' report proposed above, could Ursus' title perhaps represent the papal reaction to what was going on?

Conclusion

Amalarius' report can be read as rare and valuable testimony to a particular moment in Zadar's history when, for a short while, the needs of the local ecclesiastical elites corresponded to the grand plans of the superpowers of the day. The Holy See sought to reclaim Illyricum, with the rulers of the new Rome wanting to preserve control over at least their Adriatic provinces, while the Frankish armies and their allies were already established in the hinterland. For Rome, the Dalmatian dioceses were an important bridgehead for the restoration of influence in the depths of Illyricum, and it is not inconceivable that popes such as Hadrian I and Leo III relied on the Frankish presence in Italy and Illyricum to assist in such an undertaking, whether 'Frankish' armies proper, or those of emerging polities such as the Croatian principality. Finally, the influence of the Constantinopolitan church, under imperial aegis, should not be excluded altogether: while far from openly claiming rights over Dalmatia, by agreeing to consider Zadar as a metropolitan see, it might have been interested in promoting its position through the establishment of new Byzantine political and administrative units.

It is not my intention here to claim that Amalarius spoke to Archbishop Ursus himself. Yet the possibility that he might have met Donatus' successor, who took the title of archbishop, seems plausible. Furthermore, among the various reasons for Amalarius' rejection of his request may have been caution: unwillingness to disturb the balance established in the Adriatic between the two imperial superpowers and Rome. But Zadar's promising position was soon lost, as Frankish activities in Dalmatia and imperial decline led to the growth of the Croatian principality. The principality, in turn, backed the church of Split not only to take over the Salonitan apostolic tradition but eventually to claim primacy over all Dalmatia. The curious title of *archiepiscopus* recorded by Amalarius in his letter to Abbot Hilduin and confirmed by the inscription of Ursus may thus be read as testimony to a project conceived at the fringes of global negotiations: it reflected both the compromise between the superpowers of the day and the desire of local elites to promote their position.

Notes

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1 On the basic contours of the life and work of Amalarius, see AM, vol. 1, 58–82; Cabaniss 1954; Duckett 1969, 92–120; Jones 2001, 164–76.

2 The voyage is briefly discussed in AM, vol. 1, 65–67; Cabaniss 1954, 33–42; *OEE*, 138–43.

3 Amalarius, *Epistula ad Hilduinum*.

4 Amalarius, *Versus marini*.

5 The mission was dispatched as a response to the Byzantine embassy arriving at Aachen in 812, led by Bishop Michael of Synada and the *prōtospatharioi* Theognostos and Arsaphios. For details of this mission, see the chapter by Ančić in this volume. In a letter to Emperor Michael, Charlemagne promised to send his next embassy as soon as the weather allowed: Charlemagne, *Letter to Michael I*, 556. The *Annales regni Francorum* confirms that the envoys left in the spring of 813: 'incipiente verni temperie Amalharium Treverensem episcopum et Petrum abbatem monasterii Nonantulas propter pacem cum Michahele imperatore confirmandam Constantinopolim misit' (*ARF* s.a. 813, 137). The entry for the next year records their return: 'inter quas praecipua fuit legatio de Constantinopoli directa. Nam Leo imperator, qui Michaheli successerat, dimisso Amalhario episcopo et Petro abbate' (*ARF* s.a. 814, 140).

6 Besides his own writings, the range of Amalarius' travels was attested by opponents such as Florus of Lyon, who accused him of 'boasting about travelling all the way to Germany, Istria and Lucania [. . .]': Florus, *Adversus Amalarium* I, ch. 9, lines 5–8 (AM, vol. 2, 390).

7 Amalarius, *Liber de ordine antiphonarii*, prologue chs 1–6 (AM, vol. 3, 13–14); Amalarius, *Liber officialis proem*. ch. 1 (AM, vol. 2, 13); Amalarius, *Epistula ad Hilduinum* ch. 7, lines 15–22 (AM, vol. 1, 342). Amalarius went to Rome in 831 to meet Pope Gregory IV.

8 Amalarius, *Versus marini*. Abbot Peter was another of the Frankish envoys to Constantinople in 813–814. He asks Amalarius to send him the treatise they had spoken about during the voyage ('in itinere maris exposuisti'): *Epistola venerabilis abbatis Petri*, 229. In his response, Amalarius refers to the poem he is sending along with the required texts (*ibid.*, 231).

9 Amalarius, *Liber de ordine antiphonarii*; Amalarius, *Liber officialis* (available in English trans. as Amalarius, *On the Liturgy*).

10 Curta 2013, 145–46; Ančić 2014, 72.

11 The gap is only partially filled by translations of regional scholars' works, such as Ferluga 1976; Ferluga 1978; Ančić 1998; Goldstein 1998; Živković 2008.

12 For a similar discussion – in the context of tenth-century Byzantium – see Gaul *et al.* 2017 forthcoming.

13 Shepard 2014.

14 The text is reproduced from AM, vol 1, 342. I am grateful to Father Jeronim Marin OSB, whose generous assistance also enabled me to consult a copy of the manuscript in the Stiftsbibliothek Einsiedeln (Cod. Lat. 168).

15 Although this chapter re-assesses some of my previous conclusions, published in Vedriš 2005, I am still of the opinion that although substantial portions of the *Epistula* describe how the liturgy should be conducted, its mention of Zadar belongs to the group of rare, 'historical references' in this text.

16 See below, 296.

17 The *Translatio S. Anastasiae* has been published many times, for example, ed. Rački; Italian trans. Brunelli. For a detailed discussion of the relics' translation, see Manojlović 1901; and for the problems of the legend as a historical source, see Vedriš 2008. The legend in its present form is undoubtedly medieval, but by no means contemporary with the translation. Although not necessarily fabricated, it is therefore an unreliable source for the early ninth century. I am, however, not 'dismissing the possibility that the presumably fictional translation of the remains of St Anastasia from Constantinople to Zadar originated in that earlier account', as suggested by Florin Curta (2010, 274).

18 Jakšić 2009, 80–82.

19 Generally, Amalarius' Latin does not seem to be as bad as some of his critics have suggested. Michael McCormick (*OEE,* 139) considers it to be of high quality. Amalarius' play with *minimus–maxima potestas* in the first line of our fragment shows, for example, that he was capable of proper word puns: AM, vol. 1, 342.

20 For discussion of these events, see Strika 2004; Majnarić 2007; Ančić 2009.

21 In a letter from Pope John VIII to the Dalmatian clergy dated 10 June 879, the bishop of Zadar appears as the first among the Dalmatian prelates: *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 1, no. 13, 16–17.

22 It is worth noting that the immediate predecessors of the first metropolitan archbishop Lampredius (1141–1178), namely Miha (1124–1137) and Peter (1138–1141), also (illegally) claimed the title of archbishop.

23 Vedriš 2005, 14–18.

24 In fact, the local evidence can be dated to no earlier than the thirteenth or fourteenth century; there is also considerable epigraphical evidence which shows that Donatus was initially remembered simply as a bishop: Vežić 2002a, 238; see also below, 298.

25 Presumably in April, since according to Cabaniss (1954, 33), Easter was celebrated on 27 March.

26 According to Cabaniss (1954, 35), the embassy reached Constantinople in late July or early August and did not leave until late January, or even early February, 814, despite being free to do so. Autumn seems somewhat early for arrival in Constantinople, since Amalarius himself confirms that they feared cold weather when approaching Greece: Amalarius, *Versus marini*, 427, lines 35–36.

27 On the lack of uniformity in Latin Christendom, see Hope 1992; Ramis 1997; de Blaauw 1994, vol. 1, 35–36, 41; Palazzo 2007, 18; and especially Hen 2001.

28 'Cogitabam et me tenere romanum usum, quia scripta quae legi in Frantia, de eodem loco cogitavi advolasse': Amalarius, *Epistula ad Hilduinum*, ch. 7, lines 20–21, ed. Hanssens, 342; ed. Dümmler, 247–48. There is evidence in the subsequent passages of the *Epistula* that the monks of Nonantola 'disagreed with him' over the ordination, making Amalarius realize that their customs differed from what he had believed was Roman usage.

29 Such an interpretation would place Peter alongside other ecclesiastical dignitaries from northern Italy who took part in diplomatic missions to Byzantium. The closest to Peter is his successor Ansfrid (821–838).

30 *ARF* s.a. 805, 120.

31 'Donatus Iadrae urbis Praesul et Benenatus Venetiarum Dux, tum quia legati pacis a Carolo, tum quia ecclesiarum et omnium fidelium nuntii pacis fuerunt, Constantinopolim devenirent': *Translatio S. Anastasiae*, ed. Rački, 305.

32 Vedriš 2005, 16–18.

33 For the papal role in this context see the chapters by Shepard and Betti in this volume.

34 Leo was ordained pope on 27 December 795, meaning that the deacon's ordination took place between this date and sometime before June 813.

35 The *Liber pontificalis*, 227, records that the pope ordained '30 priests, 12 deacons; for various places 126 bishops'.

36 See the chapter by Ančić in this volume. He underlines the fact, recorded by the *Annales regni Francorum*, that the Byzantine envoys were actually given the text of the treaty in a form of a booklet ('pacti seu foederis libellum'): *ARF* s.a. 812, 136. Besides its broader significance, this clearly confirms the active role which Rome played in the negotiations.

37 Romano 2014, 3.

38 For an overview of medieval liturgy, as well as different approaches to its study, see Heffernan and Matter 2001.

39 Duckett 1969, 96–97.

40 Peters-Custot 2014.

41 For the position of Dubrovnik and Kotor in the Byzantine Adriatic, see Stevović 2002.

42 On the 'Greekness' of local liturgical tradition, see Jurković 1988–1989; on the earliest liturgical traditions in Zadar, see Mišković 2012; and for Byzantine influences, see Vežić 1985; Vežić 2002a; Vežić 2002b; Vežić 2013.

43 *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 2, no. 273, 289–90.

44 See Katičić 1998, 239; Delonga *et al.* 2001, 61.

45 The erroneous identification was noted for the first time by Ludwig Steindorff (1984, 123 n. 17).

46 According to Katičić (1998, 239) this Greek inscription ('ενδύματα γυμνόν με όντα έ [. . .]'), which was found on a fragment of the architrave from an altar screen, paraphrases Matthew 25.36 ('for when I was [. . .] naked you clothed me').

47 See Katičić 1993, 25–29; Goldstein 1995, 131; Živković 2004, 56–57.

48 See the chapters by Basić and Komatina in this volume.

49 For this particular problem, see Gibaut 1989.

50 Amalarius, *Liber officialis* II, ch.12.8 (AM, vol. 2, 224).

51 Gibaut 1989, 237.

52 Gibaut 1989, 234.

53 Gibaut 1989, 235–36.

54 A substantial portion of Amalarius' *Epistula ad Hilduinum* is dedicated to the 'quattuor tempora' or Ember Days, 'a time of fasting to mark the changing seasons, so called as occurring four times each year, and held on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after the 3rd Sunday of Advent, the 1st of Lent, Whitsun [. . .] and in the 3rd week of September': *Liber pontificalis*, 204 n. 123.

55 Duckett 1969, 97. This is confirmed by Amalarius, *Epistula ad Hilduinum* chs 7–10 (AM, vol. 1, 342–43).

56 Vedriš 2005, 11–12, 19–20.

57 Amalarius, *Epistula ad Hilduinum* ch. 1, lines 17–20 (AM, vol. 1, 341).

58 *ARF* s.a. 806, 120–21.

59 See above, n. 17.

60 For a detailed description and history of the church, see Vežić 1985; Vežić 2002b.

61 The earlier date comes from radiocarbon analysis of wooden beams found in the 1970s; the later from dendrochronological analysis undertaken in 1985: Jarak 1995, 119.

62 For discussion, see Lončar 1999; Ančić 2009; Ančić 2014; see also the chapters by Ančić and Budak in this volume.

63 Initially suggested by Frane Bulić, this argument has been developed by Vežić 2002b, 102; Belamarić 2001; Jakšić 2008, 97.

64 The entire inscription reads as follows: (top) + IN NOMINE SCE TRINITATIS. HIC REQVIESCIT CORP/VS BEATE SCE ANASTASIE + DE DONIS D(E)I ET/SCE ANASTASIE DONATVS PECCATVR EPISCO/PVS FECIT DO GRATIAS; (right side) +DE DONIS D(E)I DONATVS/PECCATVR EPISCOPVS/FECIT; (back) + IN NOMINE SCE TRINITATIS, HIC RE/QVIESCIT CORPVS BEATE SCE ANA/STASIE (Jakšić 2008, 97).

65 Jakšić 2008, 97: [do]NAT[vs] PECC[ATVR] EPIS[COPVS]; [do]NAT[vs] [pe]CCA[tv]R EPISCO[pvs]; [NI] DONATVS PECCAT[vr] EPISC[OPVS] F[ecit].

66 The inscription from the church of St Peter reads: [b]EATI ADRIANUS ET S[an]C[ta]
   E NATALIE MARTIRES TVE VOVIT ET FECIT DONAT[us]. For these two inscrip-
   tions, see Petricioli 1961, 258–60.
67 See Vežić 2002a, 237.
68 + DE DONIS D[e]I E[t] [. . .] / PECCATOR DI[. . .]: Petricioli 1961, 258–60. See also
   Delonga 2000.
69 Ančić 2014, 77; see also Vedriš 2005, 18.
70 AM, vol. 1, 65.
71 AM, vol. 1, 65.
72 Hanssens cites an eighteenth-century Venetian historian as his source, but Daniele Far-
   lati (*Illyricum sacrum*, vol. 5, 39) explicitly states that 'annus et dies mortualis Donati
   Episcopi ignotus est'.
73 Vežić 2013.
74 Vežić 2013, 8–9.
75 Vežić 2013, 8–9.
76 I am grateful to Ivan Basić for sharing with me the unpublished results of his research,
   to be published as Basić 2017 forthcoming.
77 Basić 2017 forthcoming.
78 Skoblar 2006, 69.
79 Basić 2017 forthcoming.
80 For the Byzantine presence in Dalmatia in this period see Ferluga 1976; Ferluga 1978;
   Ančić 1998; *BJ*; Goldstein 1998; Prigent 2008. Fresh (albeit sometimes controversial)
   insights are to be found in Živković 2002; Živković 2004; Živković 2008.
81 See the chapters by Shepard, Ančić, Majnarić and Gelichi in this volume.
82 Živković 2007a; this interpretation has cautiously been accepted by Florin Curta
   (2010, 267) and Neven Budak (2014, 53 n. 6).
83 The recipients included Venice: St Theodore of Amaseia; Rovinj (Rovigno, *Mons rubeus*):
   St Euphemia of Chalcedon; Rab: St Christopher of Antioch; Zadar: St Anastasia of Sir-
   mium and Sts Agape, Chionia and Irene of Thessaloniki; Split: Sts Cosmas and Damian;
   Dubrovnik: Sts Sergius and Bacchus and St Blaise of Sebasteia; Kotor: St Trypho of
   Campsada. See Osborne 1999; Stevović 2002; Živković 2007b; Preradović 2013.
84 It is important to note that 'according to long-standing practice, the right to nominate a
   bishop within a given province was the prerogative of the local Byzantine representa-
   tive' (above, 261). See the chapter by Basić in this volume for further comparative
   examples in the northern Adriatic.
85 Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 174, 288, lines 17–27; see also the chapter by Ančić in this
   volume. Interestingly, Alcuin ascribes to Charlemagne the duty to rule and reign over
   all the Christian people. Is this attitude not reflected in the attempt of the Frankish and
   Roman parties to persuade Amalarius?
86 Dzino and Parry 2014a, 3, summarizing Ančić 2014, 78–81.
87 Dzino and Parry 2014a, 3–4.
88 Jurković 1996.
89 For this issue, see the chapters by Komatina and Basić in this volume.
90 See, in particular, the chapters by Betti, Komatina and Basić in this volume.
91 See the chapter by Betti in this volume.
92 For the presence of the bishops at the Council of Hieria in 754, see Basić 2014; on their
   presence at the Council of Nicaea in 787, see the chapters by Komatina and Basić in
   this volume.
93 Jurković 1996, 120–21.
94 A similar depiction is found in the report of another Frankish traveller, Gottschalk of
   Orbais, who spent time at the court of the Croatian prince Trpimir (*c*. 840–864). In his
   treatise *De praedestinatione*, Gottschalk describes the inhabitants of the coastal cities,

as 'Latins subjected [. . .] to the rule of the Greeks' ('homines Latini Graecorum nihil-hominus imperio subiecti'): Rapanić 2013, 40; see also the chapter by Ančić in this volume.

95 See the chapters by Betti, Komatina and Basić in this volume.

96 For the latter, important references are given in the chapter by Basić in this volume.

97 Predrag Komatina has connected the new ecclesiastical arrangements in the Peloponnese, notably the establishment of metropolitan sees in Athens (783–806) and Patras (805/806), with the creation of the theme of the Peloponnese. While the Byzantines' position in Dalmatia and the Peloponnese are not comparable, the idea that 'new administrative division caused new ecclesiastical organization' and 'new conditions demanded new responses' that were not based on 'patterns of old, late Roman principles', certainly merits attention: Komatina 2009, 52. He also notes that, in his *Passio Sancti Dionysii*, Hilduin attributes the rank of archbishop to the bishop of Athens, reflecting the fact that the title *archiepiscopus* in the west was sometimes used as synonymous with that of metropolitan in the east: Komatina 2009, 38 n. 58. See also Turlej 2001, 50–53,79–85, 139–61 and, for a more general assessment of the Isaurians' ecclesiastical politics, Auzépy 2008.

98 Auzépy 2008, 264, 286.

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Glossary

A: Arabic; C: Croatian; F: French; G: Greek; L: Latin; Tc: Turkic

ad litteram **[L]** to the letter

annona **(s.)** *annonae* **(pl.) [L]** army and civil service rations raised by taxation in kind

apocrisiarius **[L]** a papal envoy, especially to the Byzantine court; senior Frankish court chaplain

archōn **(s.)**, *archontes* **(pl.) [G]** ruler (other than the *basileus*); holder of imperial title or office

arenga **(s.)**, *arengae* **(pl.) [G]** rhetorical and often formulaic introduction to a document

aula **(s.)**, *aulae* **(pl.) [L]** a court or forecourt; a ruler's court or residence

basileus **(m.)**, *basilissa* **(f.) [G]** main formal designation of the Byzantine emperor from the seventh century on

basilikos **(s.)**, *basilikoi* **(pl.) [G]** 'imperial'; general term for official specially trusted by the emperor, who would carry out diverse missions within the empire or abroad

canizauci **[Tc]** prince of the Avars (*princeps Avarum*)

capcan [Tc] title of an Avar dignitary

castellum **(s.)**, *castella* **(pl.) [L]** fortified, usually walled residence, of princes or nobles

ciborium (s.), ciboria (pl.) a permanent canopy placed over an altar or font

comes **(s.)**, *comites* **(pl.) [L]** count; in the medieval west, a term for magnate, notionally holding public office with civil and military powers; in reality usually hereditary, belonging to local leading families; term adopted for Bulgar office holders

Dalmatini **[L]** term used by the *Annales regni Francorum* to describe all the inhabitants of the Roman province of Dalmatia

dinar [A] *(from G: dēnarion, L: denarius)* standard Islamic gold coin

dirham [A] *(from G: drachma)* standard Islamic silver coin

domestici **[L]** elected officials in the Istrian towns (see also *vicarii* and *locoservatores*)

dux **(s.)**, *duces* **(pl.) [L]** term used in early medieval western sources to denote either Lombard and Frankish senior regional office-holders and commanders (termed 'dukes' in this volume); or the leaders of non-Frankish local groupings

exarch military governor of Byzantine Italy (with his base at Ravenna)

exarchate territorial and administrative unit commanded by an exarch

fidelis **(s.),** *fideles* **(pl.) [L]** literally 'faithful, loyal'; members of the armed entourage of a Frankish noble; men who had sworn oaths to serve

fitna **[A]** literally 'trial'; periodic civil wars in the Islamic world during the first 200 years after Muhammad's death in 632

francisca battle axe generally associated with the Franks, with a distinctively arched head and pointed ends

garum fermented fish sauce

general logothete [G: *logothetēs genikos*] head of the fiscal department in Constantinople which dealt with assessment and collection of taxes

gens **(s.),** *gentes* **(pl.) [L]** a tribe; a people; 'pagans'

habitus **[L]** a tendency or inclination (of an individual or a people)

horos **[G]** the Rule or Definition adopted by an ecumenical church council

hring the main and large fortified Avar encampment, known as 'the Ring'

hypatos **[G] (L:** *consul*) senior court title from the sixth century onwards

iconoclast 'breaker of images': those after 726 opposing the veneration of icons, wishing to remove them from public and private view

iconodule 'servant of images', i.e. those who venerate them

imperator **[L]** emperor

imperium **[L]** empire; majesty; of the highest authority

incipit **[L]** the first few words of a text, employed as an identifier

jihad [A] struggle (against one's baser instincts); struggle to make unbelievers submit to the will of God

jugur [Tc] one of the foremost Avar titleholders, second only to the khagan

kandidatos **[G] (from** *candidatus* **[L])** a dignity; named after the white tunics of a unit of imperial bodyguards in the late Roman empire

karst landscape formed from the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone, characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves; named after the Karst (Slovenian: Kras; Italian: Carso) plateau/region in south-western Slovenia and north-eastern Italy, which gave its name to karst topography

khagan (*caganus*, *chaganos*) **[Tc]** title of Avar and Khazar rulers

khan [Tc] 'supreme leader': used of pre-Christian Bulgar and other Turkic rulers

khutbah **[A]** public lecture or sermon, typically the main weekly sermon during the Friday communal prayers at the mosque

kleisoura **(s.),** *kleisourai* **(pl.) [G]** 'pass'; administrative district, usually smaller than a theme, in frontier zones

Lateran [Palace] a locality in Rome, originally the site of the palace of the Plautii Laterani, later the main papal residence

limes **(s.),** *limites* **(pl.) [L]** Roman border defences or system of marking the boundaries and provinces of the empire; later used of the Frankish empire

locoservatores **[L]** elected officials in the Istrian towns (see also *domestici* and *vicarii*)

magister militum **(s.),** *magistri militum* **(pl.) [L]** 'master of the soldiers': highest-ranking field commander of the late Roman army

miliarēsion **(s.),** *miliarēsia* **(pl.) [G]** the basic Byzantine silver coin, introduced by Leo III and worth 12 to the *nomisma*; characteristic of the eighth to eleventh centuries

missi (dominici) **[L]** 'messengers (of the ruler)': especially Charlemagne's emissaries

monokratōr **[G]** sole ruler

monophysite adherent of monophysitism

monophysitism doctrine emphasizing the unity of Christ's nature; went against the definition of the faith of the Council of Chalcedon (451)

nomisma **(s.)** *nomismata* **(pl.) [G; L:** *solidus***]** gold coin struck at 72 to the pound of gold, valued at 12 *miliarēsia*

paladin [F] one of the famous warriors of Charlemagne's court, of whom the Count Palatine was foremost

pallium **(s.),** *pallia* **(pl.) [L]** 'outer garment'; vestment; stole-like garment worn by the Roman pope and prelates

Passio the sufferings of a martyr

patrikios **[G; L:** *patricius***]** patrician: senior court title, often associated with offices such as *stratēgos*

patrimonium Sancti Petri (Patrimony of St Peter) the Papal States or territory held (or claimed) by the pope in Italy

Peter's Pence (*pensiones beati Petri***)** the claim of the see of Rome to the patrimony of St Peter; a voluntary annual levy collected by the papacy

polje **[C]** literally 'field'; a large, flat plain in the limestone karst region of Dalmatia

proton episcopus **[G:** *prōton***: firstly; L:** *episcopus***: bishop]** Hermagoras was consecrated 'proton episcopus provinciae Italiae'; not necessarily metropolitan, but clearly senior fellow amongst bishops

prōtospatharios **(s.),** *prōtospatharioi* **(pl.) [G; L:** *protospatharius***]** 'first sword bearer'; court title initially reserved for a high military commander, later bestowed on lower military officers and other officials

rector **(s.),** *rectores* **(pl.) [L]** guide, teacher, leader; term used by Latin sources to describe Bulgar governors in the ninth century

regnum **(s.),** *regna* **(pl.) [L]** realm; kingship; an inheritable right to power

Romani **[L]** Romans; term used to denote the Byzantine-minded population of Dalmatia

Sclavi, Sclaveni, Sclavini **[L];** *Sklavenoi* **[G]** term for the Slav tribes living close to the Byzantine empire's borders

Sklaviniai **[G];** *Sclaviniae* **[L]** regions of heavy Slav settlement and predominance, mainly in Macedonia and Greece

scramasax large knife with a single-edged blade, used in hunting and fighting

scriniarius **[L]** keeper of the *scrinium*, a case or chest for holding papers; an official

spatharios **(s.),** *spatharioi* **(pl.) [G; L:** *spatharius***]** 'sword-bearer': court title, of decreasing importance from the ninth century on

solidus **(s.),** *solidi* **(pl.) [L]** see *nomisma*

***stratēgos* (s.), *stratēgoi* (pl.) [G]** 'general': from the seventh or eighth century on the commander of a theme, who held both civil and military power

***tagma* (s.), *tagmata* (pl.) [G]** 'regiment(s)': elite cavalry and infantry unit(s) stationed in the Byzantine capital, formed in the eighth century

territoria metallorum areas of the Roman empire where mining and quarrying took place under imperial control

theme in the middle Byzantine era, the district where soldiers were quartered and from which they were recruited; an administrative unit; the army based in such a region

Three Chapters the anathematization on the orders of Justinian of the writings by three long-dead theologians (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrhus and Ibas of Edessa), in an attempt to bring together adherents of the Council of Chalcedon (451), who recognized the 'unity of Christ's person in two natures', and their monophysite opponents. Contested by the pope, this triggered a schism between the Constantinopolitan patriarchate and parts of the western church, notably in north Italy

***tremissis* [L]** late antique coin, worth one-third of a *solidus*

tudun [Tc] one of the foremost Avar titleholders

vicarii elected officials in the Istrian towns (see also *domestici* and *locoservatores*)

villa rustica the hub of a large Roman agricultural estate (*latifundium*), serving as both landowner's residence and farm centre, with housing for farm labourers and barns for crops and animals

vita a saint's *Life* or hagiography

Westwerk the addition of a western facade to churches, including an entrance vestibule with rooms above, and a tower or towers, typical of the Carolingians

Alternative place names

Unless indicated otherwise, places are in the Adriatic, Dalmatia or Pannonia.

Form primarily used	Alternative names
Aachen	Aquisgrani [Germany]
Adrianople	Edirne, Hadrianoupolis [Thrace]
Adriatic (sea)	Jadran (Jadransko more)
Anchialos	Acheloos, Pomorie [Bulgaria]
Arrabona	Győr
Balkan mountains	Stara Planina [Balkans]
Bălgrad	Alba Iulia, Gyulafehérvár, Rum
Bačka	Batschka, Bácska
Beroia	Stara Zagora [Thrace]
Butrint	Butrinto, Butrot, Buthroton [Albania]
Capodistria	*Capris*, Koper
Carnuntum	near Petronell-Carnuntum/Bad Deutsch-Altenburg [Lower Austria]
Celeia	Celje
Cirkovljan	Drávaegyház
Cittanova (Veneto)	Cittanova Eracliana, Heraclea
Constantinople	Istanbul [Anatolia]
Danube (river)	Ister
Develtos	Deultum, Debelt
Diedenhofen	Thionville [Germany]
Donji Petrovci	Bassianae
Drava (river)	Dráva, Drau, Drave
Dubrovnik	Ragusa
Duklja	Dioclea, Zeta
Duvno	Tomislavgrad
Dyrrachium	Durazzo, Durrës, Dyrrachion, Drač
Emona	Ljubljana
Fruška Gora	Tarcal, Frankenwald, *Alma mons*
Germanikeia	Mar'ash, Maraš, Kahramanmaraş [Anatolia]
Hedeby	Haithabu [Germany]
Kočićevo	Junuzovci
Karst region/plateau	Kras, Carso
Knin	Tenin, Tininium

Form primarily used	Alternative names
Kőszeg	Güns
Kotor	Acruvium, Cattaro, Dekatera
Krk	Curicta, Kyrikon, Veglia
Kvarner (gulf)	Quarnaro
Lipovci	Hársliget
Livno	Cleuna
Maritsa (river)	Hebros
Melitene	Malatya [Anatolia]
Murska Sobota	Muraszombat
Nedelica	Zorkóháza
Nicaea	Iznik, Nikaia [Anatolia]
Nin	Aenona, Nona
Novigrad	*Civitas nova*, Cittanova (d'Istria), Novigrad Istarski
Osor	Apsara, Ossero
Parenzo	Poreč, Parentium
Poetovio	Ptuj, Pettau
Prelog	Perlak
Rab	Arba
Rába (river)	Raab
Ragusa	Dubrovnik
Regensburg	Ratisbon [Germany]
Rižana	Risano
Rovigno	Rovinj, *Mons rubeus*
Salz	Bad Neustadt [Germany]
Säben (diocese)	Sabiona, Bolzano-Bressanone, Bozen-Brixen
Sabaria	Szombathely [Hungary]
Salona	Solin (*see also* Split)
Serdika	Sardika, Serdica, Sofia
Singidunum	Belgrade, Beograd
Sipar	Sapparis, Siparis
Sinj	Signo, Zein
Sirmium	Sremska Mitrovica
Sisak	Siscia
Slavonski Brod	Marsonia
Sotin	Cornacum
Split	Spalato, Spalatum (*see also* Salona)
Sremska Mitrovica	Sirmium, Srijemska Mitrovica, Szávaszentdemeter, Syrmisch Mitrowitz, Dimitrofça
Struma (river)	Strymon
Sutla	Sotla
Syrmia	Srijem, Srem, Szerémség
Tarsatica	probably modern Trsat or Rijeka
Theodosioupolis	Karin, Erzurum [Anatolia]
Thessaloniki	Thessalonica, Solun, Salonicco, Salonica
Tisza (river)	Tisa, Theiß
Tomislavgrad	Duvno

Form primarily used	Alternative names
Trogir	Tragurium, Traù
Vis	Issa, Lissa
Zadar	Iadera, Jadra, Zara
Zagreb	Agram
Zemun	Zimony, Semlin, Taurunum

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